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Spectatorship in *Mansfield Park*: Looking and Overlooking

DOUGLAS MURRAY

One of the strangest—but most revealing—items of paraphernalia carried by the fashionable tourist in search of the picturesque was the Claude glass.[1] This device came in two forms. Sometimes, Claude glasses were sets of colored lenses—gray, blue, yellow—through which travelers could view landscape. Countryside thus mediated would immediately recall a painting by Claude Lorrain, with its characteristic "harmony and tenderness of tints."[2] Perhaps more frequently, the Claude glass was a mirror such as Thomas Gray used in his travels: "a Plano-convex Mirror of about four inches diameter on a black foil, and bound up like a pocket-book."[3] The device immediately rendered countryside into "pictures": into images seen from a single point of view, with a frame—either rectangular or oval—determined by the

[1] A full description of Claude glasses—or Gray glasses, as they were sometimes called after the poet Thomas Gray—is to be found in Malcolm Andrews, *The Search for the Picturesque: Landscape Aesthetics and Tourism in Britain, 1760–1800* (Stanford: Stanford Univ. Press, 1989), pp. 67–73. See also John Dixon Hunt, "Picturesque Mirrors and the Ruins of the Past," *Art History*, 4 (1981), 257–58.

[2] Thomas Martyn, *The English Connoisseur: Containing an Account of Whatever Is Curious in Painting* . . . , 2 vols. (London: L. Davis and C. Reymers, 1766), I, 4.

[3] William Mason, *Memoirs of the Life and Writings of Mr. Gray* (1775), quoted in Thomas Gray, *Correspondence of Thomas Gray*, ed. Paget Toynbee and Leonard Whibley, 3 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1935), III, 1079n.

shape of the glass or mirror, and with a single tonality of color contributed by the mirror or filter.

It is easy to grant such a device the low aesthetic status of the Polaroid camera, and no doubt better effects were produced—though more slowly and painstakingly—by pen or pencil sketches or watercolors. But the oddity and simplicity of the Claude glass should not obscure that it functioned much as the more exalted picturesque drawing, sketch, or watercolor. All these media render scenes aesthetic through arrangement, selectivity, and exclusion. The camera or glass focuses toward and on certain features—and disregards and ignores others. And the resulting images assist the traveler in controlling and possessing—at least momentarily—the countryside. The beauties of nature are appropriated and taken away, at least in the mind's eye.

It might seem odd to begin a discussion of Jane Austen's *Mansfield Park* (1814) with a description of Claude glasses, for no one in the novel mentions them, and we have no evidence that Austen traveled with a set. Nonetheless, the Claude glass provides a pertinent, useful introduction to Austen's most troublesome novel, for most characters in the novel are perennially engaged in a process that recalls the device: they are on the prowl for pleasing visual experiences, and they tend to achieve these experiences by framing and exclusion. Fanny Price is as guilty of selective spectatorship as anyone: she carefully cuts and frames her experiences and memories. She begins to see more fully—and to be more fully seen—when she enters the public places of Portsmouth, but by the end of the novel she can become a heroine only by not seeing the distresses of others; she retreats (Austen regretfully reports) to old habits.

Readers of *Mansfield Park* have long recognized the importance of aesthetic issues in the novel. Its "improvers" of property have long been the subject of critical scrutiny and, generally, displeasure,[1] and every reader agrees that the visit to Sotherton Court announces many of the novel's preoccupations. It is now a critical commonplace that every reader must

[1] See Alistair M. Duckworth, *The Improvement of the Estate: A Study of Jane Austen's Novels* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1971): "In [Austen's] view radical improve

beware of those in the novel who go through the Northamptonshire and Norfolk countryside uprooting trees and replacing buildings—or at least dreaming of doing so.

The usual charge made against the "improvers" is that they do not show proper respect for the traditions embodied in preexistent buildings and landscape. It is argued that they do not recognize that a country seat, like the library at Pemberley, is the work of many generations. They, like the Whigs in Dryden's *Absalom and Achitophel* (1681), want to tinker with the kingdom, "To change Foundations, cast the Frame anew."[5] According to many readers of the novel, Austen disapproves of such changes: it is assumed that they remind her of the worst excesses of the French Revolution.

Such wholesale condemnations of the "improvers," however, cannot be sustained. First, Jane Austen was an "improver" herself, writing approvingly to her sister Cassandra of the changes being made at the Steventon Rectory in a letter of 27 October 1800: "Our Improvements have advanced very well;—the Bank along the *Elm Walk* is sloped down for the reception of Thorns & Lilacs; & it is settled that the other side of the path is to continue turf'd & be planted with Beech, Ash, & Larch."[6] The Austen women's move in 1807 to the Castle Square house in Southampton was accompanied by "alterations & improvements" in the house and garden (*Letters*, p. 119, 8–9 February 1807), some of the projects—such as clearing away borders "to receive Currants & Gooseberry Bushes" (p. 119)—are quite complex.

Second, Austen does not condemn all improvement in *Mansfield Park* but rather distinguishes between desirable and undesirable alterations.[7] For example, attentive readers might

ments of the kind Repton made were not improvements at all but innovations or alterations of a destructive nature" (p. 47).

[5] John Dryden, *Absalom and Achitophel*, in *Poems 1681–1684*, ed. H. T. Swedenberg, Jr., and Vinton A. Dearing, vol. 2 of *The Works of John Dryden* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: Univ. of California Press, 1972), p. 29, l. 805.

[6] *Jane Austen's Letters*, ed. Deirdre Le Faye, 3d ed. (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1995), p. 51. Further references to this work appear in the text as *Letters*.

[7] Duckworth, in *The Improvement of the Estate*, fails to distinguish between desirable and undesirable improvements. "Given Jane Austen's symbolic mode, ... Crawford's suggestions are insidious enough. His plans to 'clear away,' 'plant up,' and 'shut out'

applaud Henry Crawford's plans to reorient Edmund's Rectory at Thornton Lacey. Its "entrance and principal rooms"[8] currently face the north, ensuring that they would receive no sun for six months of the year and that every opening of the door would admit both guests and the north wind. But Henry advocates a new orientation to the east, where the sun is better and "where," as he says, "the view is really very pretty" (p. 218). Henry continues with excellent horticultural advice, suggesting a "new garden ... sloping to the south-east"—"which will be giving it the best aspect in the world"—and a new hedge on the north, thus protecting the Rectory from the harshest of the winter blasts. It is true that Henry's sound advice derives from mixed motives: he desires not only the comfort of the inhabitants of the house but also an announcement of their status. But his advice is generally excellent nonetheless, since he follows the advice of Pope in the "Epistle to Burlington" (1730–31): "To build, to plant, whatever you intend ... / In all, let Nature never be forgot ... / Consult the Genius of the Place in all."[9]

Edmund quickly repulses most of these improvements, and we can safely conclude that Fanny, as usual, agrees with her mentor (pp. 219–20), but we have no reason to believe that Jane Austen endorses their inertia. Austen, in contrast, is able to distinguish between good and bad "improvements," and it is easy to determine the principles on which her judgments are based. In *Mansfield Park* those "improvements" that she questions and satirizes are those that shield and occlude, that—like a Claude glass—screen characters from realities that the author would prefer them to confront. For example, in "improving" the Rectory at Mansfield, the late Revd. Mr. Norris and his

features of the landscape are to be read as a rejection of a traditional shape of reality while his wish to re-orient the front of the house suggests a desire for complete cultural re-orientation" (p. 52).

[8] Jane Austen, *Mansfield Park*, ed. James Kinsley and John Lucas (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1980), p. 218. Further references to *Mansfield Park* are to this edition and appear in the text.

[9] *Moral Essays, Epistle IV: To Richard Boyle, Earl of Burlington*, in *The Poems of Alexander Pope: A One-Volume Edition of the Twickenham Text*, ed. John Butt (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1963), p. 590, ll. 47, 50, 57.

lady planned that they "should have carried on the garden wall, and made the plantation to shut out the churchyard" (p. 48). This change has been put in place by the present incumbent, Dr. and Mrs. Grant. The suggestion that anyone, most particularly a clergyman, should wish to exclude views of the church and churchyard—salutory reminders of morality and mortality—arouses our most intense suspicions. Similarly, the most significant—and disturbing—changes that have been made at Sotherton Court are exclusions. The chapel itself has almost completely been occluded. Once a place of daily family prayers, now it is viewed only on the infrequent tours of the house; note that Mrs. Rushworth barely knows her lines.

The suspicious alterations that Henry Crawford suggests at Thornton Lacey are exclusions as well. He wishes to exclude images of farmwork and the lower social classes: he recommends "*the removal* of the farm-yard," which he labels a "terrible nuisance" (p. 219). And, he says, "the farm-yard must be cleared away entirely, and planted up to shut out the blacksmith's shop" (p. 218). Note that these suspect "improvements" are the very ones that Edmund endorses, as he says, "the farmyard must be moved" (p. 218). Thus Edmund is as implicated in cutting and framing as Henry Crawford is. The theme of "improvements" undoubtedly commands importance in *Mansfield Park*, but instead of providing a simple method of dividing characters into the bad "improvers" and the good conservatives, as has often been assumed, this motif indicts everyone in the novel; all characters in *Mansfield Park* live by evasion.

Austen's characters associate "improvement" with Humphry Repton (1752–1818; see *Mansfield Park*, p. 47 and passim), and they—and Austen—might have learned about the exclusionary nature of picturesque aesthetics from Repton's work itself.[10] Often Repton, like Henry Crawford and Edmund Bartram, recommended hiding reminders that great country

[10] Austen was almost certainly familiar with Repton's Red Books—paired before-and-after images that he prepared for potential clients, generally in the form of ingenious drawings with moveable flaps. Austen's cousin, the Revd. Thomas Leigh of Adlestrop, called in Repton to work on his estate of Stoneleigh Abbey, and Repton, as usual, prepared one of his Red Books to illustrate his proposals (see Mavis Batey, "Jane Austen at Stoneleigh Abbey," *Country Life*, 30 December 1976, pp. 1974–75).

seats had originally been working farms. His before-and-after designs for Harleston Hall (Figures 1 and 2), sometimes considered the model for Mansfield Park,[11] demonstrate that Repton recommended the removal of old farm buildings (here replacing them with Palladian stables). As Repton wrote in his commentary on these images, "the House . . . formerly . . . was encumbered by stables and farm yards."[12] At Harleston, Repton also planted a large lawn over the old approaches to the house (thus making much longer the distance by road from the foreground prospect point to the house), and he eradicated the practical wooden stile (which controlled the wanderings of wild and farm animals).[13]

The best-known pair of images from Repton's pen, included as a summation and advertisement of his aesthetic in his *Fragments on the Theory and Practice of Landscape Gardening* (1816), are the two versions of the "View from my own cottage, in Essex" (Figures 3 and 4). These drawings illustrate Repton's aesthetics with particular clarity. Here Repton's proposed high

[11] Elinor W. Hughes argued that Harleston House, Northamptonshire (now demolished; formerly Harleston Park) was the prototype of Mansfield Park ("The Last of Mansfield Park," *Times Literary Supplement*, 9 November 1940, p. 572), a view repeated by E. Alan Walbank in *The English Scene in the Works of Prose Writers since 1700*, ed. Walbank, 2d ed. (London: Batsford, 1946), p. 8; by Dorothy Stroud in *Humphry Repton* (London: Country Life, 1962), p. 147; and by Edward Hyams in *Capability Brown and Humphry Repton* (New York: Scribner, 1971), illustrations 33–34. Duckworth writes that Harleston is "the house most frequently considered the model of Mansfield Park" (p. 51), though he suggests that Repton's set of plans for Harleston most resemble Henry Crawford's before-and-after descriptions of Thornton Lacey (p. 52). However, R. W. Chapman seems to accept Sir Frank MacKinnon's suggestion that Cottesbrooke was Austen's model (see *Jane Austen: Facts and Problems* [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1948], p. 84).

[12] Humphry Repton, *Fragments on the Theory and Practice of Landscape Gardening* (1816), quoted in "Notes on the Illustrations," in *Mansfield Park*, ed. R. W. Chapman, vol. 3 of *The Novels of Jane Austen*, 3d ed. (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1934, 1988), p. 552.

[13] Repton's published works, which contain accounts of his projects, similarly advocate tearing down barns, stables, laundries, and even "a few miserable cottages" (*Sketches and Hints on Landscape Gardening* [London: W. Bulmer, 1794], pp. 10, 53, and Plate 4); he replaces working fields and grazing land with lakes for the enjoyment of gentlemen boaters; he drains non-picturesque ponds that merely refreshed thirsty cattle (see *Observations on the Theory and Practice of Landscape Gardening* [London: T. Bensley, 1803], pp. 40, 208, and 179). Such improvements ensure that from a few points of view—from the landowner's drives, walks, windows, and terraces—no jarring elements intrude



FIGURE 1



FIGURE 2

hedge and extension of the foreground are devices intended to shield. By a profusion of roses, he hides the local butcher's shop. Thus the viewer is insulated from the sight of workers or any unpleasant reminders of the true nature of food production. Repton hides or—worse—sends away the lame, half-blind beggar, undoubtedly a soldier injured in Britain's defense during the recent wars with France. Has this veteran, now unemployed in the postwar economic depression, been hidden in the local poorhouse or merely sent to beg in another parish? Repton allows the view of distant carriages—no doubt as patriotic reminders of England's superior post and transportation systems and no doubt to draw the eye down the road attractively, invitingly winding in the distance. But he excludes the view of nearby carriages: presumably the aesthete walking on Repton's exclusive lawn has no desire to see distinctly the sort of coach passenger who can only afford to travel atop the vehicle. Note that, in the "improvement," Repton has annexed a portion of the public roadway. As he wrote in *Fragments*, the house "stood originally within five yards of a broad part of the high road, this area was often covered with droves of cattle, of pigs, or geese. I obtained leave to remove the paling twenty yards farther from the windows, and by this Appropriation of twenty-five yards of Garden, I have obtained a frame to my Landscape" (p. 235). Repton, of course, is unconcerned that his frame is secured by appropriating ground formerly held in common.[14]

[14] Awareness of the partial perspectives inherent in the picturesque has recently become a concern of readers of Wordsworth's "Tintern Abbey" (1800). Marjorie Levinson and Kenneth R. Johnston have established that this classic of Romanticism and the picturesque deliberately occludes certain social and physical realities: the presence of homeless vagrants in the woods above Tintern Abbey, who are "the casualties of England's tottering economy and of wartime displacement", the presence of poor beggars in the Abbey itself, the crowded and noisy town and iron works active within a half-mile of the ruins, and the pollution caused by these foundries (Marjorie Levinson, "Insight and Oversight: Reading 'Tintern Abbey,'" in *Wordsworth's Great Period Poems: Four Essays* [Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1986], pp. 29–30). See also Kenneth R. Johnston, "The Politics of 'Tintern Abbey,'" *The Wordsworth Circle*, 14 (1983), 6–14, reprinted in *Romantic Poetry: Recent Revisionary Criticism*, ed. Karl Kroeber and Gene W. Ruoff (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers Univ. Press, 1993), pp. 123–38. As Levinson writes, "when one reconstructs the picture of the *place* and of the poet's *particular* (state of) mind , one learns that the narrator achieves his penetrating vision through the exercise of a



FIGURE 3



FIGURE 4

Similar modes of overlooking characterize spectatorship in *Mansfield Park*. Characters typically love to overlook while looking, both in their aesthetic experiences and in their moral and social lives as well. The Bertram family habitually wears Claude glasses when, for example, looking toward the issue of slavery. Jane Austen herself undoubtedly knew that the wealth of many great houses such as Mansfield Park derived from the work of slaves. Several Austen relatives owned plantations, one of her brothers saw service in the Caribbean, two of her brothers married into the planter class, her father tutored heirs of plantations, and she had friends among the ruling families of Antigua and Jamaica.[15] She must have realized that it was only through vagueness and evasion that such sources of wealth can be discussed at all. For example, Sir Thomas travels to Antigua, as the narrator tells us, "for the better arrangement of his *affairs*" (p. 28, emphasis added), "*Unfavourable circumstances* had suddenly arisen," causing "*very great uncertainty*" (p. 33, empha-

selective blindness. By narrowing and skewing his field of vision, Wordsworth manages to see into the life of things. At the same time and quite casually, so it seems, he excludes from his field certain conflictual sights and meanings—roughly, the *life* of things (pp. 24–25). The poem's primary poetic action is the suppression of the social. 'Tintern Abbey' achieves its fiercely private vision by directing a continuous energy toward the nonrepresentation of objects and points of view expressive of a public ... dimension" (pp. 37–38). It is possible—and tempting—to argue that Austen, anticipating Levinson and Johnson, noted Wordsworth's omissions. Fanny Price, of course, endorses Wordsworth's "romantic" view of Tintern Abbey, as evidenced by a transparency of the structure and its surrounding scenery that held its station in the window of Fanny's sanctum, the East Room at Mansfield Park (*Mansfield Park*, p. 137). Meanwhile, Austen herself had encountered evidence of the "realistic" state of the Tintern region; the truth is to be found in William Gilpin's *Observations on the River Wye* (1782), a work Austen consulted in preparing her description of the Vale of Usk in *Love and Friendship* (see Austen, *Catharine and Other Writings*, ed. Margaret Anne Doody and Douglas Murray [New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1993], pp. 76 and 314n). Gilpin's book is also one of the chief works on which Levinson and Johnson rely in researching the unpicturesque realities surrounding Tintern Abbey.

[15] For helpful considerations of Austen and slavery, see Edward W. Said, "Jane Austen and Empire," in *Raymond Williams: Critical Perspectives*, ed. Terry Eagleton (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1989), pp. 150–64; Moira Ferguson, "*Mansfield Park*: Slavery, Colonialism, and Gender," *The Oxford Literary Review*, 13 (1991), 118–39; Ruth Perry, "Austen and Empire: A Thinking Woman's Guide to British Imperialism," *Persuasions*, 16 (1994), 95–106. The heiress Elizabeth Newman (née Hall), to whom the "Rice Portrait" was given (or lent) in about 1817, and who presumably was a friend of the novelist, derived her fortune from plantations in Jamaica. See Margaret Anne Doody and Douglas Murray, "A Portrait of Jane Austen" (London: Privately Printed, 1995), pp. 5–6, 9–10.

sis added) To many readers, such deliberately, ostentatiously vague language has suggested Austen's lack of interest in business and public affairs Instead, such deliberate occlusion is radically intentional and transcribes the dominant verbal—and moral—evasiveness at Mansfield Park. Life in the English country house can only be possible if inhabitants do not see slaves laboring in the fields or hear their sad complaints

Fanny, of course, is the one character in the novel who mentions slavery, and for doing so she deserves our praise, though she does so in a remarkably ineffectual and tentative manner We should not conclude too quickly, however, that on all subjects she sees life clearly and sees it whole, for she wears Claude glasses as often as anyone in the novel She aestheticizes places by cutting and framing On the way to Portsmouth she forgets her inattentive mother and father and paints a pretty picture of herself in Portsmouth "in the centre of such a circle, loved by so many, and more loved by all than she had ever been before" (p 336) Austen probably excuses Fanny here, for Mansfield Park has not treated her well by insisting that she marry Henry Crawford against her will Within a dozen pages, however, Fanny has busily retouched her memories of Mansfield itself with amazing swiftness she recalls that "in her uncle's house there would have been an attention towards every body which there was not here [in Portsmouth]" (p 348)—though, of course, the most recent attention she had been receiving had been unstinting advice to marry against her better judgment All during the Portsmouth visit Fanny "could think of nothing but Mansfield, its beloved inmates" (p 357)—including, presumably, the inattentive Bertram sisters and the publicly cruel Mrs Norris

Readers of *Mansfield Park* can cite other passages where Fanny renders scenes or characters beautiful by omission or denial She claims to "have great pleasure in looking at" Mary Crawford (p 56), but she can do so only by momentarily silencing her moral objections and by refusing to acknowledge her jealousy It is also arguable that Fanny aestheticizes in the famous scene in which she overlooks Edmund teaching Mary how to ride Fanny tries to enjoy the scene as something akin to a painted conversation piece in a rural setting The scene, after

all, would produce a fine painting in its background is "a view of the parsonage and all its demesnes, gently rising beyond the village road", in its foreground is the "happy party" in the meadow (p 60) But, once again, Fanny can pretend to enjoy only by refusing to acknowledge her feelings of loneliness, desertion, and jealousy (pp 60–61)

Fanny most cunningly—perhaps most selfishly—reviews and avoids in the famous beginning of the last chapter of the novel Austen prepares us for Fanny's final acts of omission by mentioning herself for the first time in the text, she performs her own acts of exclusion "Let other pens dwell on guilt and misery I quit such odious subjects as soon as I can" (p 420) These lines have been cited approvingly as evidence of Austen's irrepressible good—or frivolous—spirits, or as evidence of haste, as if she could not bear to finish so unpleasant a story as this ironic endorsement of conservative values [16] Coming as this statement does after analogous acts of exclusion, I see in it Austen's announcement that closure to her complex novel requires multiple acts of evasion, she herself must put on Claude glasses to wrest a happy ending out of such unpromising material

Austen continues in one of the most remarkable passages in the novel

> My Fanny indeed at this very time I have the satisfaction of knowing, must have been happy in spite of every thing She must have been a happy creature in spite of all that she felt or thought she felt, for the distress of those around her She had sources of delight that must force their way She was returned to Mansfield Park she was useful she was beloved she was safe from Mr Crawford, and when Sir Thomas came back she had every proof that could be given in his then melancholy state of spirits of his perfect approbation and increased regard and happy as all this must make her, she would still have been happy without any of it for Edmund was no longer the dupe of Miss Crawford (p 420)

[16] Claudia L Johnson comments on this passage in Gender Theory and Jane Austen Culture in Nigel Wood ed *Mansfield Park* (Buckingham Open Univ Press 1993) p 116 The conclusion of *Mansfield Park* averts the guilt and misery towards which the rest of the novel has been heading

Note that Fanny's happiness depends on ignoring the unhappiness, the "distress," the "melancholy" of others, she is happy, as the narrator apprehensively puts it, "in spite of every thing" The insistent reiteration of the pronoun "she"—it appears nine times in the paragraph—indicates that Fanny's triumph can be considered such only from a single perspective, her own "*She* had sources of delight that must force their way *She* was returned to Mansfield Park, *she* was useful, *she* was beloved, *she* was safe from Mr. Crawford" (emphasis added) Austen further discredits her heroine by following this paragraph about Fanny's happiness[17] with a paragraph about Edmund "It is true," the new paragraph begins, "that Edmund was very far from happy himself" (p 420) And if Edmund is unhappy, what of the defeated, exiled characters—Mrs Rushworth or Mrs Norris? Even those remaining at Mansfield Park have little to celebrate the "poor" and "melancholy" Sir Thomas (p 420), now feeling "bitterly" (p. 422) and "wretchedly" (p 423), the disgraced Lady Bertram, and the diminished Tom, now safe because he—like Mr Rochester in *Jane Eyre*—has been disempowered through illness.

Austen does not lead us to hope that, in the future, inhabitants of Mansfield Park will rise to wider vision or sympathy As Fanny's sister Susan travels to her new residence, toward a house of sickness and disgrace, accompanied by her cousin Edmund, who was "evidently suffering under violent emotions," she is surprisingly *happy* as the party leaves Portsmouth, "Susan's face wore its broadest smiles. Sitting forwards, however, and screened by her bonnet, those smiles were unseen" (p 406) Susan is not an anomaly in *Mansfield Park* She reenacts its principal mode of spectatorship she makes up and inhabits a private heaven despite the misery of others And her close bonnet[18]—allowing, even encouraging both blinkered vision and

[17] Nina Auerbach writing perceptively of Fanny's "predatory comedy" notes "Austen's pitiless repetition of happy" ("Jane Austen's Dangerous Charm Feeling as One Ought about Fanny Price," in *Jane Austen New Perspectives* ed Janet Todd [London Holmes and Meier 1983] p 215)

[18] Susan no doubt wears the sort of close bonnet identified by Mary Crawford (p 43) as appropriate for girls not yet out Such bonnets contained extensions on each side of three to four inches allowing smiles such as Susan's to remain unperceived

solitary enjoyment—symbolizes the novel's dominant modes of looking and overlooking.[19]

Though Fanny Price is one of literature's most habitual spectators, she does not relish the gaze of others turned upon her. Through most of the novel she is so nearly invisible that Margaret Anne Doody has playfully suggested that she died as a child and that it is her ghost, rather than a living girl, who haunts the novel.[20] When we first see her she is "shrinking from notice" (p. 9), the verb suggesting both physical withdrawal and gradual diminishing. At family discussions she turns "into the window" (p. 101), almost disappearing into curtains and window recesses. For much of the book, she, as at Sotherton Court, "was left, . . . watched . . . and listened" (p. 87), catching telling fragments of conversation. In addition to being nearly invisible, she is inaudible: at first she "could scarcely speak to be heard" (p. 10).[21] The great house does nothing to draw her out: as Edmund tells her, "*here*, there are too many, whom you can hide behind" (p. 23). Austen suggests that Fanny fears visibility more than cruelty. When Mrs. Norris calls Fanny "a very obstinate, ungrateful girl . . . considering who and what she is" (p. 133), Fanny does not react to this statement as cruel and unfair; what affects her is "to be called into *notice* in such a manner" (p. 135, emphasis added). Like Anne Elliot in *Persuasion*, Fanny feels that she "can never be important to any one" (*Mansfield Park*, p. 22).[22] Also like Anne, she gradu-

[19] My view of Susan's translation to Mansfield Park contrasts with Tony Tanner's optimism. Tanner sees Mansfield "as typically taking in 'fresh potential' and 'raw material' then refining it" (*Jane Austen* [Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1986], p. 148). Malcolm Kelsall argues similarly (see *The Great Good Place: The Country House and English Literature* [New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1993], p. 113).

[20] See "A Regency Walking Dress and Other Disguises: Jane Austen and the Big Novel," *Persuasions*, 16 (1994), 83–84.

[21] Fanny is invisible, too, when she visits Portsmouth (see pp. 343, 344, 345, 346, 348). We learn that Fanny's mother had never much valued her daughters. "Her daughters never had been much to her" (p. 355).

[22] See my discussion of *Persuasion* in "Gazing and Avoiding the Gaze," in *Jane Austen's Business: Her World and Her Profession*, ed. Juliet McMaster and Bruce Stovel (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1996), pp. 42–53.

ally takes on increased visibility with praise. When Edmund tells her that "there is no reason in the world why you should not be important where you are known," she "*colour[s]* at such praise" (p. 22, emphasis added). Austen here employs, to be sure, the worn cliché of the modest female blushing, but she also suggests increased visibility with increased attention: the ghost takes on flesh.

Unfortunately for Fanny, taking on flesh, moving into adulthood, and "coming out" are rituals that require being seen. She most fears the male sexual gaze turned upon her, "the very aweful ceremony of walking into the drawing-room," of having men such as Henry Crawford there "to observe her" (p. 201). When Edmund relays his father's observations on Fanny's "figure" (p. 178)—or is this *his* recognition of her sexual power transferred to his father?—she turns away, indicating the threat that that embodiment holds for her.

Fanny's much-discussed horror of appearing on the stage must be considered a manifestation of this fear of visibility. Since the time of Lionel Trilling, Fanny's firm "no, indeed, I cannot act" (p. 131) has been read as her highest moment of moral fortitude. To many readers Fanny becomes the noble Platonist rejecting the illusions of the stage,[23] perhaps even Jesus Christ rejecting the kingdoms of this world. Fanny is indeed a principled character, but we must acknowledge that part of her hesitancy derives from a simpler motive: from her desire not to be seen. When the pressure of the young Bertrams and the Crawfords is upon her, when she begins "to feel that almost every *eye* was upon her" (p. 132, emphasis added), her cry "I really cannot act" is as much a desire for invisibility as an indicator of moral fortitude.

Fanny is perpetually in hiding, and it is surely significant that her most rhapsodic utterances are spoken in praise of places of concealment and darkness. The chapel that she so fervently recalls from Walter Scott's *Lay of the Last Minstrel* is "'blown by the *night* wind of Heaven'" (*Mansfield Park*, p. 77, emphasis added). The avenue at Sotherton Court for whose

[23] See Trilling, *The Opposing Self: Nine Essays in Criticism* (New York: Viking Press, 1955), pp. 218–20 and Tanner, *Jane Austen*, pp. 162–63.

fate she expresses such fear would of course provide shade from the sun and prying eyes (p. 50). Her favorite garden features seem to be shrubberies, as in her unexpected paean at the Grants' Rectory "The evergreen!—How beautiful, how welcome, how wonderful the evergreen!" (p. 188). At Mansfield Park she rhapsodizes over night and "the deep shade of the woods" "Here's what may leave all painting and all music behind, and what poetry only can attempt to describe" (p 102) It is also significant that being "in a hot sun" (p. 65) gives Fanny a headache, for the sun—all-seeing, all-illuminating—makes possible the visibility that she finds so painful

Despite its heroine in love with concealment, *Mansfield Park* is in fact one of the most plein air of Jane Austen's fictions, demonstrating its author's knowledge of the "public spheres" of the Enlightenment that is, those places and media that made possible and encouraged the free circulation of people, information, and ideas during the early modern period [21] The novel interests itself in up-to-date communication, belying Austen's reputation—still prevalent in some quarters—as a shy, retiring spinster unaware of the world around her

News sometimes travels in the novel by old-fashioned means, such as by word of mouth Mary Crawford's harp "was seen by some farmer, and he told the miller, and the miller told the butcher, and the butcher's son-in-law left word at the shop" (pp 51–52) But newer methods of commercially distributed information figure prominently as well Newspapers are particularly important Henry Crawford has been in the habit "for many years" (p 209) of subscribing to the newspaper "esteemed to have the earliest naval intelligence" (p 210), and this journal publishes news of William Price's promotion. Late in the novel another newspaper brings to Portsmouth communication

[21] My discussion of the public sphere, like many current discussions of the Enlightenment, is indebted to Jurgen Habermas's *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society* (*Strukturwandel der Offentlichkeit* [1962]), trans Thomas Burger with Frederick Lawrence (Cambridge Mass MIT Press 1989)

of Henry's elopement with Maria Rushworth (pp. 400–401). "Gossip" columns, with their coy but easily penetrable inclusion of initials, ensure that "private" scandals quickly become public information; as the paper itself says, it announces its news "to the world" (p. 401). These columns serve a disciplinary function by urging readers to "cut" public offenders—those who have violated marriage, society's chief arrangement for its continuity and for the orderly transfer of property. Such columns function efficiently in the novel, much as disciplinary stocks and branding had functioned in past eras.[25] If news travels efficiently in *Mansfield Park*, physical travel is sometimes still a problem—but not an insurmountable one. At the very beginning of the novel we learn that England has an efficient mechanism to transport an unaccompanied ten-year-old the considerable distance from Portsmouth, on the south coast of England, to Mansfield Park in Northamptonshire (pp. 5–6).

Though Fanny gathers with delight any public information about her brother, she avoids public places through much of the novel. As we have seen, balls distress her, largely because of the possiblity of sexual gazes being directed at her. Though she speaks well, she does not cultivate the alert exchanges that characterized the enlightenment public sphere of the coffee-house or salon; she is no Elizabeth Bennet. Her conversation, as Pam Perkins says, is "stilted, exclamatory."[26] In fact, the only public place in which Fanny flourishes is the church, and it is no accident that she wishes to become the wife of a clergyman. But note that Fanny's allegiance is to the *rural* church, attended by a stable, familiar, homogenous population. Edmund and Fanny have nothing kind to say about urban congregations, which attract "crowds" (pp. 83–84). Fanny finds "chapel" services bearable in Portsmouth because it is customary there for men and women to sit apart (p. 372).[27]

[25] Mr. Price's violent response to the article—"I'd give her the rope's end as long as I could stand over her" (p. 401)—is merely a strong version of the response to adultery that his society expects and finds proper.

[26] "A Subdued Gaiety: The Comedy of *Mansfield Park*," *Nineteenth-Century Literature* 48 (1993): 6. Perkins interestingly argues that Fanny embodies sentimental comedy, which does not encourage wit and sparkle.

[27] Presumably the Prices attend the garrison chapel, which, "once appertaining to the monastery of *Domus Dei*, [had] been thoroughly repaired for the use of the officers

During her sojourn in Portsmouth, however, Fanny finds herself often in public, away from the protective shrubberies of Mansfield Park. She—surprisingly—walks "on the ramparts" (p. 372) in broad daylight. Fanny's sojourn in Portsmouth offers experiences consonant with the name of the town. Portsmouth is, of course, a "port"—simultaneously a temporary home and a place from which one launches explorations. It is also a "mouth," locus of speech and taste, of exchange between inner and outer, public and private. As a port, the meeting place of water and land, it is a place of margins, of possible transformations, for both Fanny and Henry Crawford.

Readers of the novel have too often painted Portsmouth as defective, dirty, and noisy, in contrast to the calm of Mansfield Park.[28] Purveyors of such critical commonplaces do not sufficiently discriminate between the Price household and Portsmouth itself. Most of these critical commonplaces derive from Fanny herself, a source of doubtful reliability. When she most misses Mansfield, she remembers—with dubious accuracy, as we have seen—"its beloved inmates, its happy ways. . . . At Mansfield, no sounds of contention, no raised voice, no abrupt bursts, no tread of violence was ever heard; all proceeded in a regular course of cheerful orderliness; every body had their due importance; every body's feelings were consulted" (p. 357). In Portsmouth, Fanny looks back with sorrow at her "present exile from [the] good society" of Mansfield (p. 358)—though that society included the dull Dr. Grant and Mr. Rushworth, the licentious Bertram sisters (quarreling like Goneril and

and soldiers of the garrison" (Samuel Lewis, *A Topographical Dictionary of England* . . . , 4 vols. [London: S. Lewis, 1844], III, 580).

[28] The demonization of Portsmouth is a commonplace of Austen criticism. For Lionel Trilling in *The Opposing Self*, Portsmouth is "what we mean by vulgarity" (p. 225). To Alistair Duckworth in *The Improvement of the Estate*, it is "a Hobbesian state of incivility" (p. 77). Malcolm Kelsall in *The Great Good Place* calls Portsmouth "vulgar, common, uncultured" (p. 114). See also Tony Tanner, *Jane Austen*, pp. 145–48. My discussion of Portsmouth below differs greatly from theirs, for they find in the novel a celebration, as Trilling would have it, of "security . . . fixity and enclosure, a refuge from the dangers of openness and chance" (p. 210). The public sphere in the Enlightenment and Portsmouth in *Mansfield Park*, do not exemplify the qualities that Trilling praises. In my view Austen's favorable depiction of Portsmouth, the site of the Royal Naval Academy, anticipates rather than contradicts her later praise of the Navy in *Persuasion*.

Regan over Henry Crawford), and the dangerous Crawfords themselves.

In point of fact Portsmouth is by no means completely bad for Fanny. It serves to remind us that she had not always been so passive. William recalls her childhood energy there: "We used to jump about together many a time, did not we? when the hand-organ was in the street? I am a pretty good dancer in my way, but I dare say you are a better" (p. 226). These lines suggest that the vibrant young Fanny could indeed have become another Elizabeth Bennet. On the trip to Portsmouth, Fanny's demure demeanor warms: "Of pleasent talk between the brother and sister, there was no end" (p. 341).

It is true that, in Portsmouth, Fanny's parents do not seem to merit her respect (p. 354), and she finds herself barely noticed by her father upon her return (pp. 344–45):

> With an acknowledgement that he had quite forgot her, Mr. Price now received his daughter, and, having given her a cordial hug, and observed tht she was grown into a woman, and he supposed would be wanting a husband soon, seemed very much inclined to forget her again. (p. 346)

This meeting is quite rightly held against Mr. Price. But we should note that his ignorance of Fanny does not much differ from that of Sir Thomas. That Sir Thomas does not know that Fanny sits in the cold schoolroom surely indicates that he had not visited it for years, not since the time his own daughters left off receiving instruction. Mr. Price's comment about Fanny's marriageability finds a parallel in Sir Thomas's attention to Fanny's "figure" (p. 178). Since Sir Thomas's supposedly avuncular comment on Fanny's physical development shades into erotic connoisseurship, perhaps Mr. Price's inattentive matter-of-factness is preferable after all.

Once Fanny is settled in Portsmouth she makes decisions, takes control. Within the disorderly Price household she chooses to befriend and cultivate Susan. She settles quarrels between younger siblings. She organizes space to create a room for independent activities: "By degrees the girls [Fanny and Susan] came to spend the chief of the morning up stairs" (p. 363). And more significant, Fanny ventures, with considerable success,

outside of the Price's small house. She subscribes to a circulating library. "She became a subscriber—amazed at being any thing *in propria persona*, amazed at her own doings in every way; to be a renter, a chuser of books! And to be having any one's improvement in view in her choice! But so it was. Susan had read nothing, and Fanny longed to give her a share in her own first pleasures" (p. 363). Fanny takes part in the circulation of knowledge: she receives, she sends forth to her sister. By spending her money, she circulates currency as well as ideas. She supports booksellers and authors through the entrepreneurial middleman of the circulating library. She takes on a legal identity, renting *in propria persona*.

The climax of Fanny's participation in public life in Portsmouth is her Sunday-afternoon walk on the ramparts of the town (pp. 372–73), ramparts that, according to Samuel Lewis's *Topographical Dictionary of England* (1844), "afford extensive views."[20] This walk is introduced as Mrs. Price's "public place, there she met her acquaintance, heard a little news, talked over the badness of the Portsmouth servants, and wound up her spirits for the six days ensuing" (*Mansfield Park*, p. 372). The key phrase here is "public place": this is no darkened chapel, no landscaped park of arching trees and dense shrubbery, no rural parish church, not even a quiet circulating library. At Portsmouth Point one encounters the full tide of human existence:

> there were enjoyments in the day and in the view which would be felt.
>
> The day was uncommonly lovely. It was really March, but it was April in its mild air, brisk soft wind, and bright sun, occasionally clouded for a minute; and every thing looked so beautiful under the influence of such a sky, the effects of the shadows pursuing each other, on the ships at Spithead and the island beyond, with the ever-varying hues of the sea now at high water, dancing

[20] According to Lewis, "the view of the town from Portsdown Hill, combining an infinite variety of objects of the deepest interest, is strikingly magnificent. The fortifications, which are the most complete in Europe, combine beauty with strength. . . . The harbour, which is unrivalled for capaciousness and security, is about 250 yards broad at the mouth, and, expanding into a broad open lake, extends for several miles to the north, affording shelter to ships of the largest burthen" (*Topographical Dictionary*, III, 579–80).

> in its glee and dashing against the ramparts with so fine a sound, produced altogether such a combination of charms for Fanny, as made her gradually almost careless of the circumstances under which she felt them (pp 372–73)

Despite the attentions of Henry Crawford (who is walking between the two Miss Prices "with an arm of each under his" [p 372]), Fanny does not feel his gaze—or the pressure of his arm—to be uncomfortable She does not fear the gaze of other promenaders For the first time, in fact, Fanny participates without pain, without self-consciousness, in the system of public gazes that characterizes the Enlightenment Her pleasure does not derive from excluding part of the scene all is spectacle, and she herself is happy to be a part of it Here is no evergreen shrubbery behind which one can hide The bright sun—her enemy in the *Mansfield garden*—becomes a source of beauty, varying the "hues of the sea" (p 373) This is the first time Fanny has waxed enthusiastic over a daytime scene Beauty here is not motionless, like the fallen trees in Cowper's poem *The Task* or the distant stars in the cold night sky, but all is "dancing" and "dashing" The sea in the distance is wild and sublime—note the sounds of the waves—but alive with human spirit and activity in the form of ships, for Portsmouth was a very busy harbor, "the general rendezvous where all ships either homeward or outward bound take convoy, and frequently 700 merchantmen have sailed at one time from Spithead" (*Topographical Dictionary*, III, 580) Austen's evocation of the harbor looks as if the Portsmouth chapters were written in praise of Britain's naval and mercantile endeavors, as if she—or even Fanny Price herself—has put away her Scott and Cowper and taken Dryden's *Annus Mirabilis* or Pope's "Windsor Forest" off the shelves of the circulating library

The phrase "combination of charms" suggests the vigorous bombardment of Fanny's senses, and the phrase "almost careless of the circumstances" suggests that this most hesitant of heroines could act impulsively The experience draws her psychologically, romantically close to someone unlike her

> The loveliness of the day, and of the view, he [Henry Crawford] felt like herself They often stopt with the *same* sentiment and

> taste, leaning against the wall [in physical contact with the scene], some minutes, to look and admire, and considering he was not Edmund, Fanny could not but allow that he was sufficiently open to the charms of nature, and very well able to express his admiration. (p. 373; emphasis added)

The use of the phrase "charms of nature" is Austen's sly trick. Of course, this is *not* a natural scene, with the ships, crowds, and the human-ordered communication and trade with distant places. Austen uses free indirect discourse here:[30] she transcribes Fanny's thoughts, and the telling word "nature" is Fanny's. For the first time Fanny feels that the public sphere—this constructed, human world of gazing and being gazed upon—is as comfortable and natural as Cowper's glen or Mansfield's shrubbery.

At this moment it also seems natural for Fanny to be attracted to someone very unlike her. Previously Fanny, dangerously narcissistic, has looked with favor only on other versions of herself.[31] She repeatedly acknowledges that her closest bond is with her brother William, and Austen represents her reunions with him as restorations of childhood unity (see pp. 210, 213, 225). Fanny can imagine no better future than restoring this past unity and living in a nonerotic parody of marriage, in a "comfortable" "little cottage" with her brother (p. 341). Her more overtly erotic relationship is with a first cousin and, even more important, someone who has long been a substitute for William. When Fanny, at the command of the patriarchs of her family,[32] leaves Portsmouth at the age of ten (p. 9), she finds

[30] In free indirect discourse, a technique used frequently by Austen, the author transcribes a character's thoughts without direct commentary. In *Mansfield Park* this technique is exemplified in the passage early in the novel when Fanny observes Edmund and Mary Crawford riding her horse (pp. 60–61).

[31] For psychological accounts of the relation between Edmund and Fanny, see Glenda A. Hudson, *Sibling Love and Incest in Jane Austen's Fiction* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1992), pp. 35–50, and Barbara Rasmussen, "Discovering 'A New Way of Reading': Shoshana Felman, Psychoanalysis, and *Mansfield Park*," in Wood, ed., *Mansfield Park*, pp. 121–35; and Misty G. Anderson, "'The Different Sorts of Friendship': Desire in *Mansfield Park*," in *Jane Austen and the Discourses of Feminism*, ed. Devoney Looser (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1995), pp. 170–71.

[32] As Rasmussen suggests (p. 143), Austen here anticipates Jacques Lacan's theory that the "nom de père" wrenches the child from the unity of childhood experience into an uneasy recognition of selfhood.

distress in the new adult world, in "rooms [that] were too large for her to move in with ease," in which "she crept about in constant terror of something or other" (p. 12). The one person at Mansfield Park who is kind to her is Edmund, and it is clear that, from the moment when he finds her "crying on the attic stairs" (p. 12), she fixes her familiar affection for William onto her cousin. By means of a psychological transference, Edmund begins, as Austen tells us, to fill the role of "William, the eldest, a year older than herself, her constant companion and friend" (p. 13). Loving Edmund provides Fanny a socially acceptable mode of loving her brother.[33] Edmund's relationship to Fanny extends further, for he is not only brother-substitute but also the sympathetic, attentive father-teacher,[34] molding her young mind, attending to the young child as her own father had not: "he recommended the books which charmed her leisure hours, he encouraged her taste, and corrected her judgment; he made reading useful by talking to her of what she read, and heightened its attraction by judicious praise. In return for such services she loved him better than any body in the world except William; her heart was divided between the two" (p. 19). With so much shared by Fanny and Edmund, it is hardly surprising when Mary Crawford tells Fanny, "you *have* a look of *his* sometimes" (p. 151).

At Portsmouth, however, Fanny for the first time finds herself comfortable with someone unlike Edmund. Such loss of self-consciousness, such loss of the inhibiting fear of the gaze, recalls one of the key images found in the work of Jean-Jacques Rousseau: the concept of liberation brought by communal spectacle and public festivity.[35] According to Saint-Preux in *La*

[33] See Claudia L. Johnson, *Jane Austen: Women, Politics, and the Novel* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1988), pp. 116–18, for a discussion of Austen's treatment of incest in the novel.

[34] Enlightenment fiction provides many examples of eroticized teacher-pupil relationships. See the relationships between Harriet Byron and the title character in Richardson's *Sir Charles Grandison* (1753–54), between Julie and Saint-Preux in Rousseau's *La Nouvelle Héloïse* (1761), and between Miss Milner and Dorriforth in Elizabeth Inchbald's *A Simple Story* (1791).

[35] The importance of public festivals in Rousseau received important attention in Jean Starobinski, *Jean-Jacques Rousseau: La transparence et l'obstacle* (Paris: Gallimard, 1971), pp. 116–21. Starobinski calls the "fête idéale l'une des images-clés de l'œuvre de Rousseau" (p. 117). Jacques Derrida also considers this theme in *Of Grammatology* (*De la Grammatologie* [1967]), trans. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (Baltimore: Johns

Nouvelle Héloïse (1761), the grape-harvest festivals (the "heureuses vendanges") in the village of Clarens combine enjoyment and utility ("l'agréable à l'utile").[36] The "fête" brings the villagers together in a sweet equality "Tout dans la plus grande familiarité" (p. 607), in "la douce egalité" (p. 608). Events are unscripted, improvised, avoiding the confinement and precision of ritual. Perhaps most important for Rousseau and for Austen's Fanny Price, every participant in the "fête" is simultaneously actor and spectator ("donnez les Spectateurs en Spectacle").[37] As a result, debilitating self-consciousness disperses, and hearts and minds open, symbolized by Rousseau's frequent use of sun imagery: at the beginning of Saint-Preux's description of the "vendange" the sun lifts the fog as a curtain rises to reveal a stage ("le voile de brouillard que le soleil éleve au matin comme une toile de théatre" [p. 604]), revealing a public sphere in which citizens are not afraid to see and be seen. Here and in the Portsmouth section of *Mansfield Park*, Rousseau and Austen share a belief (or a desire) that places should (or do) exist where visibility is not dangerous, where looking is not painful, where the complex system of illumination and gazing that was the Enlightenment could bring citizens together.

Jane Austen, like every other citizen of the Enlightenment, felt the eye of public surveillance upon her. The pressure—to substitute imagery of weight for that of sight—of being in the public eye was especially great for the young women of Austen's social class. Their persons and behavior were subject to the perpetual scrutiny of relatives and neighbors. From their early teens they were scrutinized by potential marriage partners as well. It is possible that the most

Hopkins Univ. Press, 1974, 1976), pp. 302–9. Of course, in *Mansfield Park* Fanny generally avoids public spectacles: not only amateur theatricals but also Christmas observances. "Fanny had no share in the festivities of the season" (p. 30).

[36] *Julie ou la Nouvelle Heloïse*, in vol. 2 of *Œuvres Complètes de Jean Jacques Rousseau* (Paris: Gallimard, 1961), p. 604.

[37] *Lettre a M. D'Alembert*, in vol. 5 of *Œuvres Complètes* (Paris: Gallimard, 1995), p. 115.

penetrating, the most discriminating gazes of the Enlightenment were aimed at young women in Bath, a city Austen visited in the 1790s and later inhabited with considerable reluctance and unhappiness. The Bath years left their scars on Austen, for her creativity slowed, and a career that had begun so promisingly, with many short works and with drafts of three fine novels, appeared to come to an abrupt conclusion. Austen wrote shockingly little during the first decade of the nineteenth century.

For Austen, the gazes directed upon her by her society were intensified by her vocation as writer of fiction. From the time of *Volume the First* and before, her works had been subject to examination and comment by family and friends. As her work reached a larger public with the appearance of *Sense and Sensibility* in 1811 and *Pride and Prejudice* in 1813, her fiction became subject to more fearsome scrutiny by a distant, impersonal "reading public" and by professional book reviewers. It should hardly surprise us that in *Mansfield Park* Austen provides a nuanced, complex picture of the pain of being seen. Fanny Price, like most heroes and heroines of fiction, is a partial self-portrait of the author.

Self-portraits, of course, are not always flattering. Sir Joshua Reynolds, as Austen undoubtedly knew, painted himself with the spectacles made necessary by his near-sightedness.[38] Austen would not have wanted to present an idealized image anyway: as she memorably wrote to her niece, Fanny Knight, in March 1817, "pictures of perfection" made her "sick & wicked" (*Letters*, p. 335). Fanny Price is a part of Austen that she herself did not like. Fortunately, Jane Austen contained more selves than Fanny. After the move to Chawton in 1809 Austen was able to rebuild her career and her confidence; she introduced her novels into the public sphere. They were successes, and we can still see in Austen's letters her deep pleasure at hearing them discussed. This pleasure—this blossoming under the gaze of the public—continued in her careful attention to her relatives' and neighbors' "Opinions of *Mansfield Park*" transcribed in 1814 and 1815, and later of *Emma*, transcribed in 1816.[39] For Austen

[38] See *Reynolds*, ed. Nicholas Penny (New York: Harry Abrams, 1986), pp. 320–22.

[39] Brian C. Southam provides these dates in Austen, *Minor Works*, ed. R. W. Chapman, vol. 6 of *The Works of Jane Austen* (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1954, 1988), p. 431.

these years must have been happy and, indeed, heady, not least because in *Mansfield Park* she had tried to lay a ghost to rest, a ghost of one of her past selves In Fanny Price, Austen summons and dismisses the girl with the Claude glasses—the figure who fears to be fully seen and to see fully, the girl who thrives on invisibility and on partial vision

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"Without a Cross": The Cultural Significance of the Sublime and Beautiful in Cooper's *The Last of the Mohicans*

STEVEN BLAKEMORE

JAMES Fenimore Cooper's interest in aesthetics has long been an established commonplace of Cooper criticism, focusing on such subjects as the relationship between Cooper's landscapes and those of the Hudson River School of painters, the influence of Scottish Common Sense aesthetics on his writings, and his use of the conventions of the sublime, the beautiful, and the picturesque. In short, Cooper's imaginative reemployment of a series of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century contexts and sources has been studied by a variety of critics who have contributed to our understanding of Cooper's art.[1] Discussing probable influences on Cooper, Donald A. Ringe notes that eighteenth-century British critics such as John Baillie, Hugh Blair, and Edmund Burke had written extensively on the sublime and that "it would

[1] See Howard Mumford Jones, "Prose and Pictures: James Fenimore Cooper," *Tulane Studies in English*, 3 (1952), 139–43; James T. Callow, *Kindred Spirits: Knickerbocker Writers and American Artists, 1807–1855* (Chapel Hill: Univ. of North Carolina Press, 1967); Donald A. Ringe, *The Pictorial Mode: Space and Time in the Art of Bryant, Irving, and Cooper* (Lexington: Univ. Press of Kentucky, 1971); Blake Nevius, *Cooper's Landscapes: An Essay on the Picturesque Vision* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: Univ. of California Press, 1976).

be cause for wonder" if Cooper and other American write "had not been influenced by them" (*The Pictorial Mode*, p. 18 The aesthetic concept of the beautiful had been opened b Francis Hutcheson in his *Inquiry into the Original of our Ideas Beauty and Virtue* (1725) and later by Edmund Burke, whose *Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime ar Beautiful* (1757) soon became the most influential and publ cized treatment of both the sublime and beautiful in Englan and America.[2] Burke had a special interest in the sublime an beautiful and had endeavored to distinguish their characteri tics, which he felt had been blurred and "confounded" by othe writers (see *Enquiry*, pp. 1, 36, 112, 114).

In the *Enquiry* Burke's distinction between the sublim and beautiful centers on traditional distinctions between me and women, masculinity and femininity. For instance, Burke as sociates the sublime with danger, terror, astonishment, majest violence, ruggedness, magnitude, power, and punishmen while he associates the beautiful with pleasure, pity, sympath compassion, tenderness, kindness, liberality, smallness, smoot ness, delicacy, fragility, timidity, and weakness. Thus, accordin to Burke, we admire the masculine sublime but love the fem nine beautiful: "we submit to what we admire, but we love wh submits to us" (*Enquiry*, p. 113). Alluding to Burke's *Enquir* Thomas De Quincey in 1838 noted that "the Sublime *by way polar antithesis to the Beautiful*" was "an idea of English growth the Sublime   in contraposition to the Beautiful, grew up o the basis of *sexual* distinctions—the Sublime corresponding t

[2] Edmund Burke, *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime a Beautiful*, ed. J. T. Boulton (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1958). Hereafter cite as *Enquiry*. For the influence of Burke's *Enquiry*, see Samuel H. Monk, *The Sublime Study of Critical Theories in Eighteenth-Century England* (Ann Arbor: Univ. of Michiga Press, 1960). Another significant context for Cooper's novel is Washington Irving Americanization of Burkean aesthetics in "The Author's Account of Himself" (in *T Sketch Book* [1820]), in his one-paragraph recounting of the infinite resources of "th sublime and beautiful" in the American wilderness (*The Sketch Book of Geoffrey Cray Gent.*, in *Washington Irving: History, Tales, Sketches*, ed. James W. Tuttleton [New York: L brary of America, 1983], pp. 743–44). In another context, it is remarkable that the has been no critical commentary on the conspicuous parallels between the image topics, and themes of Irving's "Traits of Indian Character" (*The Sketch Book*, pp. 1,00 12) and those in Cooper's novel.

the male, and the Beautiful, its anti-pole, corresponding to the female."[3] Burke, in addition, had distinguished between two kinds of the sublime: a powerful sublime that threatens us directly, producing *terror* (the strongest effect of the sublime), and an aesthetic sublime that we can safely enjoy from a distance. There were also two kinds of beauty—a fragile, feminine beauty inspiring love and protection and a fatal, seductive beauty causing relaxation and death. Within the context of society, it was civilized man's sublime duty to love and protect social, cultural, and feminine beauty.[4]

While critics have considered Burke's *Enquiry* as a possible source that Cooper may have absorbed into his writing, no one has made a specific case that it figures prominently in any of his works. The principal reason is that while Cooper employs a recognizably Burkean language of the sublime and beautiful, he does not refer specifically to either Burke or the *Enquiry*.[5] Cooper, however, would have been familiar with Burke, who

[3] *The Collected Writings of Thomas De Quincey*, ed. David Masson, 14 vols. (Edinburgh: Adam and Charles Black, 1890), X, 300–301. De Quincey's emphasis.

[4] For Burke's version of fatal seductive beauty, see Frances Ferguson, *Solitude and the Sublime: Romanticism and the Aesthetics of Individuation* (New York: Routledge, 1992), pp. 51–53. For sublime chivalric protection contra any threatening sublime, see Frances Ferguson, "Legislating the Sublime," in *Studies in Eighteenth-Century British Art and Aesthetics*, ed. Ralph Cohen (Berkeley and Los Angeles: Univ. of California Press, 1985), p. 134. In Cooper's novel Magua and the Hurons represent the terrifying power of the red sublime—a power existing only in the past, in the world of 1757. American readers could hence enjoy aesthetically, at a safe distance, Cooper's captivity narrative. Uncas and Chingachgook, in contrast, represent the protective sublime that confronts red terror. At the novel's end they lead the Delawares into a war that annihilates the Hurons but that also ends, as will be seen, with the passing of Mohican "beauty."

[5] There were, of course, many available British editions of Burke's *Enquiry*, and a recent American edition had been published in Philadelphia by S. F. Bradford in 1806. Responding to my question whether Cooper had read the *Enquiry*, James Franklin Beard replied in a letter (11 January 1986) that there are "no reliable records of Cooper's readings, though internal references in his books provide some clues." "He was extremely well read, however, and his mind was extraordinarily retentive. I should say it very probable indeed that he had read Edmund Burke's *Philosophical Enquiry*, but I can't recall any specific references to it. It is the sort of book that would have attracted his interest, and it may well have entered into his esthetic awareness directly or indirectly. It is hard to see how he could have escaped it, though he was probably more familiar with Burke's successors and could have absorbed Burke through them." In this essay I argue that Cooper, whether directly or indirectly, had Burke in mind while writing *The Last of the Mohicans*, rather than absorbing the *Enquiry* through his successors.

was known in America for his opposition to the French Revolution and, more importantly, for his defense of America in the British Parliament before and during the War of Independence. Throughout the nineteenth century Burke's speeches *On American Taxation* (1774) and *On Conciliation with America* (1775) were canonical texts read by generations of American schoolchildren. The "in-the-air" argument is, of course, no substitute for proof, hence I contend that in *The Last of the Mohicans* (1826) Cooper was reworking Burke's aesthetic categories, and I establish this by a close textual analysis, suggesting how specific passages of the *Enquiry* impinge on Cooper's novel.[6] My focus is hence restrictedly specific, and while the *Enquiry*, I believe, does figure in other of Cooper's writings,[7] my thesis is that Cooper employed the recognizable language and categories of Burke's *Enquiry* to contextualize his own sublime and beautiful scenes, contemplating a momentary "cross" of the sublime and beautiful—in opposition to Burke's "eternal distinction" (*Enquiry*, p. 124)—before reendorsing the distinction in an imaginative evocation of the end of Indian "beauty."

Cooper, in effect, rewrites the *Enquiry* by incorporating "beauty" into sublime scenes that Burke contended could only be enjoyed when a pressing, life-threatening sublime was removed and hence enjoyed, at a distance, as an aesthetic sublime (moving and awesome, yet safe). Cooper incorporates the beautiful into his sublime scenes in an intentionally illusive "mix" that corresponds to the illusory mixing of the white and Indian races in *Mohicans*. Thus, in his meditation on the historical significance of race in the New World, Cooper reinscribes Burke's distinction between the sublime and beautiful as an "eternal distinction" between the races. In this essay I begin incrementally, starting with details in the novel that are suggestive of the *Enquiry* (perhaps coincidental and not conclusive)

Coincidentally, Cooper's novel is subtitled *A Narrative of 1757*, the year the *Enquiry* was published.

[6] *The Last of the Mohicans: A Narrative of 1757*, ed. James A. Sappenfield and E. N. Feltskog (Albany: State Univ. of New York Press, 1983). Further references are to this edition and are cited parenthetically within the text as *Mohicans*.

[7] See, for instance, Steven Blakemore, "Language and World in *The Pathfinder*," *Modern Language Studies*, 16, no. 3 (1986), 237–38.

and I then proceed to stronger examples that cumulatively suggest that Cooper was rewriting the history of the Indian and Anglo-American races in the terms of Burke's aesthetic treatise.

In the *Enquiry* Burke had located sources of the sublime in falling precipices, "in the gloomy forest, and in the howling wilderness" (p. 66, cf. pp. 143, 148), all reminiscent of Mingoes falling from precipices (*Mohicans*, pp. 71, 75, 338), the sublime scenery that Hawk-eye and his party view on the dizzy "verge of [a] precipice" (p. 140), the gloomy forests of *Mohicans*, the "gloomy" Huron lodges (p. 238), and the "dark and gloomy passages" of the Huron cave (p. 335), as well as the "howling wilderness" that Hawk-eye and his band traverse (pp. 119, 183). Burke was thinking, *inter alia*, of sublime American landscapes, thinking of the sublime darkness of "heathen temples" and savage American Indians. "Even in the barbarous temples of the Americans at this day, they keep their idol in a dark part of the hut, which is consecrated to his worship" (*Enquiry*, p. 59).

Cooper spends much of *Mohicans* contriving sublime effects and responses of terror and horror by reemploying specific elements of the sublime discussed by Burke in the *Enquiry*. For instance, Burke pays special attention to the sublimity of certain discordant sounds, and in *Mohicans* Cooper amplifies terrifying, discordant sounds.[8] Burke contends that "a sudden beginning, or sudden cessation of sound of any considerable force, has [sublime] power. The attention is roused by this, and the faculties driven forward, as it were, on their guard." He adds that "in every thing sudden and unexpected, we are apt to start, that is, we have a perception of danger, and our nature rouses us to guard against it" (*Enquiry*, p. 83). Readers of *Mohicans* will recall many instances in which Cooper seems to flesh out Burke.

[8] See Thomas Philbrick, "*The Last of the Mohicans* and the Sounds of Discord," *American Literature* 43 (1971): 25–41.

In the cave under Glens Falls, for instance, "the sudden and almost magical change, from the stirring incidents of . . . combat, to . . stillness," acts on Duncan's "heated imagination" as he "listen[s] intently to any signal, or sounds of alarm" (p. 81) The aural transitions are intensified in *Mohicans* by the sudden screams and shouts of hostile Indians, which break the deceptive silence. In the *Enquiry* Burke had commented on the sublime sound of cataracts (emphasized by Cooper in the cavern under Glens) and the "similar" astonishing "effect" of the "shouting of multitudes"—"the sole strength of the sound, so amazes and confounds the imagination," causing the mind to stagger (*Enquiry*, p. 82) Similarly, in Glens cavern, "there had arisen such a tumult of yells and cries, as served to drive the swift currents of [Duncan's] blood, back from its bounding course into the fountains of his heart" (*Mohicans*, p 66) Later, Magua signals the massacre at William Henry by raising "the fatal and appalling whoop," and the Indians respond with "such a yell" that it causes those "who heard it" to listen "with a curdling horror at the heart" (p 176) This prefigures a subsequent reversal when a Delaware war whoop "was answered by a single war-cry and a yell passed through the air, that sounded as if a thousand throats were united in a common effort," causing the Hurons to stagger and then flee in panic (p 334) As in the *Enquiry*, the shouting of multitudes in *Mohicans* produces stupefied terror

If, as I am beginning to suggest, *Mohicans* consists of images and commentaries influenced by or drawn from the *Enquiry* then Cooper nevertheless disregards, at strategic points, Burke's distinction between the sublime and beautiful in a purposefully futile endeavor to evoke a harmonious blend of both—a blend inevitably dispelled by a terrifying sublime force After Cooper creates scenes in which both the sublime and beautiful seemingly complement each other, then the pressing reality, the terror of the Burkean sublime, breaks the aesthetic illusion Cooper plots aural and scenic interludes in which Hawk-eye's harassed band momentarily enjoys aesthetic sights and sounds just before a terrorist sublime invades or intrudes

The various scenes that take place at Glens Falls reverberate with the sublime and beautiful as well as with their deceptive fu

sion.[9] Alice and Cora, for instance, "in a spot devoted to seclusion," enjoy the waterfall and the scene's "romantic, though not unappalling beauties". Cooper's oxymoron frames "romantic beauties" in the harmonious context of the "sublime"—the awesome and powerful scenes of nature—while the litotes, "not unappalling," understates and mutes the sublimity that threatens to overpower Alice and Cora's aesthetic experience. The women hence enjoy a moment of sublime beauty, "imbib[ing] a soothing impression of security." The soothing moment is an illusion, however, and they are "soon recalled from a contemplation of the wild charms" (another oxymoronic linkage) "to a painful sense of their real peril"—the reality of hostile Indians and hence of sublime terror (p. 49). Inside the cavern, after Hawk-eye describes the cataract in terms of the sublime, his "auditors" disagree with Hawk-eye's "untutored description" of the cataract's "wild beauties," i.e., the harmonious blend of the sublime and beautiful (pp. 55–56). "Wild charms" and "romantic beauties" were code words in the nineteenth century for the *picturesque*, a word applied to certain kinds of writing by analogy to a type of painting that grew out of the effort to find a middle ground between the sublime and beautiful. In a note added in 1831 Cooper observed that "the description of this picturesque and remarkable little cataract, as given by the scout, is sufficiently correct, though the application of the water to the uses of civilized life has materially injured its beauties. . . . in a new country, the woods and other objects, which in an old country would be maintained at great cost, are gotten rid of, simply with a view of 'improving' as it is called." This last comment is in context of explaining the aesthetic "taste of Hawk-eye" (*Mohicans*, pp. 55–56n).

[9] While there are other generic sublime-and-beautiful scenes and sounds in *Mohicans*, Cooper concentrates the specific allusions and echoes to Burke's *Enquiry* in the cave at Glens—a supposedly "safe" place known only to Hawk-eye and the Mohicans—in order to emphasize "white" illusion, i.e., that white beauty could exist safely in 1757 outside the protective boundaries of white civilization. In the second half of the novel Cooper evokes the *Enquiry* to illustrate Indian illusion: the future triumph of sublime Indian culture and the mixing of "white" beauty (Cora) with the protective Indian sublime (Uncas) in an Indian heaven outside of white "time."

Cooper's point is that Hawk-eye sees only the sublime, instead of the picturesque, whereas presently, in 1831, the cataract's natural "beauties" are being erased by the forces of modernity. Hence, Cooper is conscious of the aesthetic cost of the powerfully sublime civilization that is removing natural "beauties." It is significant, however, that Cooper seems ideologically blind to the fact that the natural sublime, its savage "wildness," is also being removed or destroyed by sublime, "progressive" white civilization, in ways that suggest, at the novel's end, the destruction of red power and the end of Indian beauty. Conscious of historical change (the principal theme of *Mohicans*), Cooper nevertheless documents the shift from Hawk-eye's sublime to Alice and Cora's "wild beauties," to the present and future erosion of nature's beauties.[10] It is significant that Hawk-eye's "auditors" dismiss his "untutored description," receiving from it "a cheering assurance of the security of their place of concealment" (p. 55); feeling safe and removed from danger, they aesthetically frame the sublimity of Hawk-eye's cataract in context of a more reassuring beauty, i.e., in context of a "safe" sublime that can be enjoyed aesthetically. Thus they enjoy the sublime beautifully, but this is also an illusion, since they have no "security" in "their place of concealment": they are soon captured by the Hurons and confronted with sublime reality. In the novel's first half Cooper undermines the beautiful by having Hawk-eye's auditors overdetermine it. In addition, the picturesque as an intermediate point between the sublime and beautiful in nature—and hence the suggestive blending of both—is extended thematically to the hypothetical mixing of sublime and beautiful races. But this aesthetic, racial possibility

[10] Wayne Franklin notes that the area of Glens Falls, which Cooper had visited in 1824, "had hardly escaped the *furious process of change visited upon so many nominally* wild areas of the nation from the 1780s to the 1830s." Given the "improving" (a village, a bridge, a dam, and lumber mills), Cooper had to "erase[e] history from nature" and imagine what the "wilderness" *once* looked like. Franklin uses, perhaps unwittingly, the vocabulary of the sublime and beautiful to characterize Cooper's imaginative endeavor: "Cooper had to bring the river [and landscape] back to its original state on his own, in his mind, before using it as the setting for his beautiful, *if* horrifying, episode." (Wayne Franklin, "The Wilderness of Words in *The Last of the Mohicans*," in *New Essays on "The Last of the Mohicans*," ed. H. Daniel Peck [Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1992], pp. 30–35.)

is also overdetermined and dismissed in the novel's second half If Cooper suggests that the sublime and beautiful are united in the New World, he simultaneously undermines this beautiful illusion.[11]

The 1757 world of *Mohicans* is in fact a "past"—a world in which precarious or illusory crossings no longer exist—and in the present of the readers of Cooper's novel the thrilling landscape of the sublime is no longer seen by the nineteenth-century "tourist, the valetudinarian, or the amateur of the beauties of nature, who, in the train of his four-in-hand, now rolls through the scenes" that the narrator has "attempted to describe" (p 147) If the landscape and everything else in "white," nineteenth-century America is being made safely comfortable, then Cooper is also clear, as we will see, that the price of "progress" is the erasure of the beautiful Delaware civilization by sublime, white civilization—the erasure of what can be called red beauty

In the scenes preceding this erasure, however, the complementary harmony of the sublime and beautiful is repeatedly broken by terrifying sounds and finally by an invading "red" sublimity that carries white beauties into captivity As usual, Glens Falls is the locale where this takes place Incongruously forgetting the hostile Indians and feeling deceptively safe David, Alice, and Cora indulge in an old Puritan hymn (in a mix of "low, dying chords" and high, "thrilling notes"), a hymn that draws wistful tears from Hawk-eye, who "gradually suffered his rigid features to relax" as he sinks into a soothing recollection of the past (p 59) [12] These "low, dying chords" suggest "that sinking, that melting, that languor" that Burke maintains "is

[11] In the *Enquiry* the sublime (whether in its terrifying or protective versions) keeps the mind alert and alive to danger whereas seductive beauty lulls us into a false sense of security and hence reality See Ferguson *Solitude and the Sublime* pp 51–53 Cooper I suggest reinscribes this distinction (sublime alertness to pressing realities and a beautiful illusion of security) in his contemplation of illusive mixes In both the *Enquiry* and *Mohicans* the sublime is the reality principle

[12] Hawk-eye I suggest has slipped into a state of seductive beauty (momentarily forgetting the hostile Indians and therefore feeling secure) a beauty that Burke associates with "relaxation" and hence with dangerous indolence and inattention lulling the labor and rigid alertness needed for productivity and survival See *Enquiry* pp 134 138–40 148–50 157 and Ferguson *Solitude and the Sublime* pp 52–53

the characteristical effect of the beautiful, as it regards every sense" (*Enquiry*, p. 123; Burke is discussing beautiful sounds). The effect, however, is simultaneously sublime, solemn and slow; the notes are "thrilling" and the singers are in a state of "excitement"—even the cataract's accompanying sound of the biblical "rushing of the waters" evokes a muted sublimity (see the terrifying prophecies in Isaiah 17:12–13) that may be enjoyed aesthetically in safety (*Mohicans*, p. 59).

The aesthetic union of the sublime and beautiful is suddenly interrupted, however, by an unearthly cry (cf. *Enquiry*, p. 122: "the beautiful in music will not bear that loudness and strength of sounds, which may be used to raise other passions"), "penetrating . . . to the inmost hearts of all who heard it," causing Hawk-eye and the Mohicans to express unspoken "astonishment" (p. 59). The deceptive aesthetic illusion is again overpowered by sublime reality: there is no refuge or security in the world of Glens. The listeners consequently experience sublime terror, since their self-preservation suddenly depends on their alertness (cf. *Enquiry*, pp. 38, 41, 51, 86). The unearthly cry is then "followed by a stillness" (*Mohicans*, p. 59), evoking Burke's comment that "a sudden beginning, or sudden cessation of sound of any considerable force, has the same [sublime] power. . . . The attention is aroused by this . . . we have a perception of danger, and our nature rouses us to guard against it. It may be observed, that a single sound of some strength, though but of short duration, if repeated after intervals, has a grand [i.e. sublime] effect" (*Enquiry*, p. 83).

In *Mohicans* Hawk-eye and the Delawares "listened, as if expecting the sound would be repeated, with a manner that expressed their own astonishment" (p. 59). The unearthly cry, in fact, is repeated at intervals, causing *astonishment*—a key word identifying the effect of sublime terror in human beings: "The passion caused by the great and sublime in *nature*, when those causes operate most powerfully, is Astonishment; and astonishment is that state of the soul, in which all its motions are suspended, with some degree of horror. . . . Astonishment . . . is the effect of the sublime in its highest degree" (*Enquiry*, p. 57). In addition, Hawk-eye and the Mohicans listening, "as if expecting the sound would be repeated," recalls Burke's observa-

tion that when the ear receives a sound (a "stroke") and the sound is "repeated," then "the repetition causes an expectation of another stroke. And it must be observed, that expectation itself causes a tension" (*Enquiry*, p. 140; cf. p. 134).

Hawk-eye is certainly tense with anticipation, since he cannot identify what Cora calls "the shock of this mysterious noise," "brood[ing] on the unaccountable interruption, which had broken up their evening devotions" (pp. 61, 60). Shortly, however, "the same strong, horrid cry, as before," rends the air, and the vulnerable travelers, after "a long, breathless silence," look at each other "in fearful *expectation* of hearing the sound *repeated*" (p. 61, emphasis added).[13] The tension increases when Hawk-eye interprets the cry as an apocalyptic warning from heaven, after Cora asks, "is then our danger so pressing?" (p. 62). Nineteenth-century readers would have again recognized Burke's vocabulary of the terrifying sublime, which excites ideas of "pain and danger" (*Enquiry*, pp. 38–39, 59), since pain and danger produce terror, which is "the strongest emotion which the mind is capable of feeling" (p. 39).

Indeed, the scene continues to evolve as if Cooper were in an intertextual dialogue with Burke, for Cora's anxious query, whether "our *danger* [is] so *pressing*" (emphasis added), conjures up Burke's discussion of a dangerous sublime that presses too close on the observer or spectator, so that it cannot be enjoyed aesthetically:

> When danger or pain press too nearly, they are incapable of giving any delight, but at certain distances, and with certain modifications, they may be, and they are delightful, as we every day experience. for terror is a passion which always produces delight when it does not press too close. The passions which belong to self-preservation, turn on pain and danger; they are delightful when we have an idea of pain and danger, without being actually in such circumstances. And indeed the ideas of pain, and above all of death, are so very affecting, that whilst we

[13] Cf. Hawk-eye in the ruins of William Henry: "the scout placed himself in an attitude of intense attention, and listened long and keenly for a repetition of the low sound that had so unexpectedly startled him" (p. 192). Mention should be made of Hawk-eye's warning signal, "a low hissing sound" (pp. 193, 271) that causes Chingachgook and Uncas to listen with alert attention, perhaps suggested by Burke: "A low tremulous intermitting sound ... is productive of the sublime" (*Enquiry*, p. 83).

remain in the presence of whatever is supposed to have the power of inflicting either, it is impossible to be perfectly free from terror.
(*Enquiry*, pp. 40, 46, 51, 65)

We have seen that Cooper also employs the distinction between a dangerous sublime that presses too closely for comfort and an aesthetic, "beautiful" sublime that may be enjoyed at a safe distance. But Cooper always breaks the aesthetic illusion with the pressing reality. After Hawk-eye confirms to Cora that the danger is indeed pressing, there is another deceptive lull—an interlude in context of the beautiful: the moon rises and plays upon the waters, and "the scene" is "as still as night and solitude could make it" (p. 63). Although they are surrounded by Hurons, Duncan asks Alice and Cora to enjoy the scene by recontextualizing it as a sublime, aesthetic event: "Here is nothing to be seen but the gloom and quiet of a lovely evening; . . . how much should we prize such a scene, and all this breathing solitude, at any other moment. . . . Fancy yourselves in security, and what now, perhaps, increases your terror, may be made conducive to enjoyment" (p. 63). Or, as Burke noted, sublime danger can be enjoyed at a safe distance; terror produces delight when the former cannot press too closely—the passions of self-preservation "are delightful when we have an idea of pain and danger, without being actually in such circumstances" (pp. 40, 46, 51). But Duncan is actually asking the women to imagine, to enjoy aesthetically, a "safe," sublime illusion ("fancy yourselves in security"), for there is no security and the danger is pressing: they are surrounded by hostile Indians and have been terrified by an unidentified cry.

It is precisely at this point, just after Duncan asks Alice and Cora to fantasize a delightful sublime, that the real sublime suddenly presses closely. Duncan is interrupted again by the unearthly cry, signifying the abrupt transition from "solitude" to "repeated" sound that Burke contends comprises threatening sublimity. Duncan, however, redeems himself by finally identifying the unsettling cry that has repeatedly startled and terrified everyone: "'Tis the horrid shriek that a horse will give in his agony, oftener drawn from him in pain, though some-

times in terror. My charger is either a prey to the beasts of the forest, or he sees his danger without the power to avoid it" (p. 63). Discussing "the cries of Animals" in section 20 of the *Enquiry*, Burke notes that "animals in pain or danger, are capable of conveying great [i.e., sublime] ideas, unless it be the well known voice of some creature, on which we are used to look with contempt" (*Enquiry*, p. 84). The horse's cry in *Mohicans* is not "well known" to Hawk-eye and the Mohicans, and it is only recognized by Duncan subsequently: "I know the sound full well, for often have I heard it on the field of battle. . . . The sound might deceive me in the cavern, but in the open air I know it too well to be wrong" (pp. 63–64).

Cooper continues playing with the same sounds and silences, with the same repetitions, in order to evoke climactic, sublime effects. Still in the cavern and following a "sudden" change from combat to "stillness," David begins another Puritan hymn, as Cooper again suggests the harmonious fusion of the sublime and beautiful. David's voice produces "sounds rendered trebly thrilling," and as "Alice unconsciously drie[s] her tears," "the open sympathy of the listeners" reinspires David, "whose voice regained its richness and volume, without losing that touching softness which proved its secret charm." The beautiful charm, however, is broken again by a terrifying Indian yell announcing the pressing presence of the red sublime: "A second yell soon followed the first . . . the air continued full of horrible cries and screams, such as man alone can utter and he only when in a state of the fiercest barbarity" (p. 84). By the chapter's end the red sublime destroys the beautiful charm and hence the aesthetic illusion. Duncan "and his companions were dragged from their shelter, and borne into the day where they stood surrounded by the whole band of the triumphant Hurons" (p. 88). Throughout *Mohicans* and especially in the cavern at Glens, Cooper fleshes out a variety of Burkean 'texts,' illustrating them in new and significant ways. Just as Burke privileges the sublime over the beautiful in the *Enquiry*, Cooper repeatedly suggests that "white" beauty cannot withstand the presence of the savage sublime in the "real" world. The fact that this world itself is an artistic illusion, an imaginative evocation of

a past no longer present, also impinges, as we shall see, on the beautiful, precarious world of the Delawares.

In *A World by Itself* H. Daniel Peck documents a series of distinctions between the white world (the novel up through the massacre at William Henry) and the Indian world constituting the second half of *Mohicans*. If the first part of the novel deals with the search for the father (Munroe) by Cora and Alice, then the second part marks the father's quest for his daughters, a mythic quest whose object, Peck maintains, is "the eternal feminine."[14] The transition from the landscape of the white world to that of the Indian world is a transition from difficult, masculine roughness to beautiful, feminine "delicacy" (Peck, *A World by Itself*, p. 123). The first is a "broken" landscape (see *Mohicans*, p. 140), the second is a soft pastoral. Trying to find the father (Munroe) and the British fort of William Henry, Hawk-eye leads his "followers" through a treacherous landscape of jagged shadows, "cast from their high and broken summits," through a "painful" route "lying over ground ragged with rocks, and intersected with ravines." The travelers' "progress" is "proportionately slow." The "party" then begins "slowly to rise a steep and rugged ascent, by a path that curiously wound among rocks and trees" (*Mohicans*, p. 139).

In contrast, when Hawk-eye and his band move through the Indian landscape, he urges them to move "softly" so they can follow "the beauty of the trail" (*Mohicans*, p. 185; cf. p. 217). Peck notes perceptively that the delicate landscape corresponds to the feminine object of the quest (the captive daughters), and he quotes Hawk-eye's admonition that everyone "touch the leaves lightly, or you'll disconsart the formation. That! that, is the print of a foot ... [of] the dark-hair's [Cora]."[15] The novel hence divides in half, into distinctions and contrasts. "The forest [for instance], which in the first journey was drawn

[14] *A World by Itself: The Pastoral Moment in Cooper's Fiction* (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1977), p. 122.

[15] *Mohicans*, p. 187; cf. Peck, *A World by Itself*, p. 123. Peck notes that although Hawk-eye makes these statements "before the party crosses the Horican and enters the un

in images of difficulty," is presented in the second as a beautiful pastoral vision (Peck, *A World by Itself*, p. 127). The two worlds constitute a contrast between a broken landscape of difficulty and discord—a world associated with the masculine—and a soft, mythic world associated with the feminine.[16]

I have expounded on Peck's luminous reading not only because it crystallizes the reader's experience of the novel but also because it corresponds to the categories of the sublime and beautiful, which in the *Enquiry* are based upon the sexual distinctions between masculinity and femininity. Cooper's language reinvokes Burke's. The rugged, masculine landscape and the delicate, feminine one conjure up Burke's commentary in the *Enquiry*: "the effects of a rugged and broken surface seem stronger [i.e. more sublime] than where it is smooth and polished" (i.e. beautiful) (p. 72); smoothness is "a quality so essential to beauty, that I do not now recollect any thing beautiful that is not smooth. . . . For take any beautiful object, and give it a broken and rugged surface, and however well formed it may be in other respects, it pleases no longer" (p. 114). Burke is surprised that those who have written about the beautiful have failed to mention "the quality of smoothness in the enumeration of those that go to the forming of beauty. For . . . any ruggedness, any sudden projection, any sharp angle, is in the highest degree contrary to that idea" (p. 114). Similarly, a swift movement over a "smooth turf" will provide "a better idea of the beautiful" than the sublime contrast of being "hurried over a rough, rocky, broken road" (p. 155)—a good retrospective description of the two dialectical journeys in *Mohicans*. In short, "beauty should be smooth, and polished; the great, rugged and negligent" (*Enquiry*, p. 124; cf. p. 151).

In the beautiful Indian landscape of chapter 32 Cooper provides a vision of the "verdant and undulating surface of forest, which spread itself unbroken, unless by stream or lake, over such a vast region of country" (p. 326). This is the publicly recognizable region and language of beauty or, as Burke put it in the *Enquiry*, "the softness, the winding surface, the unbroken

known [Indian] region . . . at this point . . . the initial attempts to find the trail of the two sisters, the essential motion of the second journey has been established" (p. 125, n. 5).

[16] See Peck, *A World by Itself*, p. 135, for a comparison of the two journeys.

continuance, the easy gradation of the beautiful" (p. 122). If Cooper, as I suggest, did rework the terms of Burke's *Enquiry* into *Mohicans*, he reinscribed Burke's discussion of sublime-and-beautiful sights and sounds, reconceiving their significance within the gendered and fragmented world of nineteenth-century America.

The gendering of *Mohicans*, for instance, coheres with Cooper's vision of racial confrontation, specifically the removal of red beauty by the white sublime. Just as Burke in the *Enquiry* envisioned antithetical varieties of the sublime and beautiful, Cooper also envisioned "red" and "white" varieties. I want to lead into a reconsideration of the "last" of the Mohicans, the last of red beauty, by first crystallizing the novel's theme of racial purity and sexual mixing via the (implicit) context of Burke's *Enquiry*.

Cooper, as we have seen, reaffirms Burke's "eternal distinction," which Cooper rewrites into a political, cultural context by continually illustrating that any mix of the sublime and beautiful is a fatal illusion ending in captivity or death. The covert corollary is an ideology of national and racial purity. The novel's good Indians, for instance, are racially pristine, while the bad Indians are ambiguously mixed. Chingachgook, like Uncas, is "an unmixed man" (evoking Hawk-eye's boast that he is without a racial "cross"), both are unfallen, prelapsarian Indians—"two warriors of the 'unchanged' race," the great Ur-Indian race of the Mohicans (pp. 33, 310). In the 1826 preface to *Mohicans* Cooper informs us that the virtuous Delawares called themselves "the 'Lenni Lenape,'" which signifies "an 'unmixed people'" (p. 2).[17] In contrast, the novel's bad Indians (those tribes actively aligned with the French) are thematically mixed, especially the Hurons. Metaphorically they are, as Hawk-eye denominates a Mohawk, "mongrel" (p. 39).

[17] The racial term "Lenni Lenape" is used by Magua, Uncas, the Delawares, and the narrator with reference to the Delawares (*Mohicans*, pp. 301, 308–12, 320, 330, 341, 349).

Cooper is repeatedly clear that the fall of the Indians' world is related to their cultural intercourse with whites, especially their fighting and hence mixing in white wars, specifically the wars of the imperialist English and French. Similarly, traditional Indian enemies (the Delawares and Hurons) are unnaturally allied by mixing with the white French "father"—Montcalm. The Delawares "maintained an amicable, though a watchful, intercourse with the warlike and savage" Hurons, "whom chance had, for a time, brought in such close and disagreeable contact with themselves" (p. 225). The result is the decline of Indian power and the "confusion" of Indian "tribes" and "nations" (pp. 196–97)—a confusion extending to their culture and language.[18]

This pejorative mixing also applies to the good whites (the American colonists and the Scots) who are fighting England's wars. In a pivotal passage Munro, the Scottish commander of William Henry, tells Duncan angrily of the "curse entailed on Scotland, by her unnatural union with a foreign and trading people"—the English. Scotland's national curse is significant in context of Cora's racial "cross," for Cora's mother was "descended, remotely, from that unfortunate class, who are so basely enslaved to administer to the wants of a luxurious people'" (p. 159). In other words, the indignant Munro—a Scot who mixed with a woman with remote black blood, a woman whose mother had mixed with a "gentleman," i.e., an Englishman, of the West Indies (the English and French are everywhere in the New World)—blames the curse of slavery on the English, who had introduced and mixed it into the New World. The racial curse is connected to the "unnatural union," the fatal national mixing of Scotland (an agrarian nation) with the English—a promiscuous "foreign and trading people." The "unnatural union" is an obvious sexual pun as well as a political allusion to the "Act of Union," the Act passed by the Parliament of Westminster in 1707, linking Scotland to England. In addition, Cooper's Anglo-American audience would recognize in Munro's condemnation of "a foreign and trading people"—"a luxurious

[18] See Steven Blakemore, "Strange Tongues: Cooper's Fiction of Language in *The Last of the Mohicans*," *Early American Literature* 19 (1984): 21–41.

people" consumed with commercial "wants"—the language of the traditional "Country" critique: the condemnation of commerce for corrupting a country's "virtue" by making its people weak and luxurious.[19] Metaphorically, Cora's personal "curse" is also the national curse that Scotland entails for mixing with a corrupt people who have "enslaved" the blacks as well as the Scots, who unnaturally fight their "foreign" wars. The "unnatural union" is hence a double imperialist screw. Cooper's overt focus on the Indian and white "national" races subtextually includes the suppressed black race, and the historical fiction of 1757 absolves the Americans of the New World's historical curse, its original sin.[20]

The consequence of fatal, foreign mixes, this "unnatural union" links the national and sexual "curse" together. Later, when Cora speaks to Tamenund, she identifies herself as "one

[19] For the historical context see J. G. A. Pocock, *Virtue, Commerce, and History: Essays on Political Thought and History, Chiefly in the Eighteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1985); and John Sekora, *Luxury: The Concept in Western Thought, Eden to Smollett* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1977), pp. 63–109. For American preoccupations with luxury see Kenneth Silverman, *A Cultural History of the American Revolution: Painting, Music, Literature, and the Theatre in the Colonies and the United States from the Treaty of Paris to the Inauguration of George Washington, 1763–1789* (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell, 1976), pp. 304–67. Cf. Josiah Quincy's argument for the non-importation of English products in the Boston *Gazette* (12 February 1770): England's abhorred revenue acts will compel America to "break off forever"—all social intercourse "with those whose commerce contaminates, whose luxuries poison, whose avarice is insatiable, and whose unnatural oppressions are not to be borne."

[20] Munro suggests that the Scottish people, like the blacks, are enslaved, serving the luxurious English (one of the reasons the novel implies that England was destined to lose America) and fighting, like the Indians, England's imperialist wars. Throughout the eighteenth century the Scots were instrumental in promoting and carrying out England's colonial interests—Scotland's "curse," Munro suggests. The fact that the Scots generally supported and fought with the English in the American Revolution is another historical context that Cooper perhaps encodes. See Linda Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation, 1707–1837* (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1992), pp. 101–45. Unlike the Scots, the Americans of course broke the "unnatural union" with England from the beginning; *Mohicans* anticipates the sublime war of national manhood and the break with the foreign "mother" (see pp. 12–13). Just as the Americans are absolved from the curse of slavery, the Indians' fall is projected back to 1757 (cf. Cooper's 1831 preface, *Mohicans*, p. 7); and while Cooper makes their fall sympathetically tragic, adding enough historical guilt to disturb the conscience of white America, the real Indian fall, like the introduction of slavery, predates 1776, originating with the arrival of the Dutch (see *Mohicans*, p. [illegible]) and ending with the European wars of the English and French.

of a hated race, if thou wilt—a Yengee" (p 304) Tamenund subsequently rejects her appeal "for succour" (under Indian law, the captive Cora is Magua's prisoner and thus his potential captive "wife") by referring to the historical arrival of white Europe and the consequential fall of the Delaware nation Cora then resignedly accepts her fate, noting that "the curse of my ancestors has fallen heavily on their child" (pp 304–5) The repetition of "curse" evokes Munro's condemnation of slavish, unnatural unions, and Cora's cross ("the curse of my ancestors") also cuts both ways The curse refers to her ancestor's white sins the curse of (English) slavery (the "cross" Cora bears), and the white (European) usurpation of the Indians' land—both of which Cora "pays" for with her captivity and death It is as if Cora contains the sins of her white "fathers," sins that, at the novel's end, are buried with her

Cooper thus rewrites Burke's distinction between the sublime and beautiful (both of which Burke contended were being "confounded") in terms of the pristine distinction between nations and races Yet the condemnation of unnatural unions is thematically ambiguous Assertions of racial superiority, for instance, are explicitly rejected Cora rebukes Duncan for distrusting Magua because "his skin is dark," and Munro accuses Duncan of racial prejudice—of preferring the racially "pure" Alice to Cora—an accusation Duncan denies but inwardly admits to (pp 21, 159, cf p 260) Munro proud of his mixed daughter, accuses Duncan of being too racially proud to mix with her "You scorn to mingle the blood of the Heywards, with one so degraded—lovely and virtuous though she be?" (p 159) [21] In addition, Magua's speech to the Delawares in which he separates the races in terms of the Indians racial

[21] The reference to racial "degradation" reoccurs twice when Cora prefers to die than to be Magua's wife the first time "sinking under a deep consciousness of the degradation of [Magua's] proposal", the second preferring that her (white) race should end rather than meet with such a degradation" (pp 109, 313) Because of the complex racial ambiguities in America Cooper's racial ideology is itself crossed—the novel's promotion of purity is contradicted by the novel's implicit mixes If Duncan's fear of racial degradation is criticized Cora's fear is reaffirmed by the narrator Cooper emphasizes Cora's "whiteness" only when the unnatural union with Magua is broached (see for instance pp 103–5) In her potential union with Uncas however her 'darkness' predominates

superiority to the black and white races is, to the reader, blatantly demagogic (pp. 300–301). (The Hurons are the novel's racist Indians: the cowardly Reed-that-Bends, for instance, is said to have "pale" blood [p. 247].)

Moreover, the novel's imagery often contradicts or belies its pristine racial ideology. The "white" hero, Hawk-eye, the scout who obsessively insists that he is a pure white, a man without a racial "cross" (underscoring Cooper's anxiety that he is too close to his Indian brothers) is metaphorically the very mix he denies. He is first described as possessing "nearly savage equipments," like Chingachgook, and of having a "sunburnt and *long-faded complexion*" of possible European extraction (p. 28, emphasis added). Boasting that even the evil Iroquois would not deny that he is a "genuine white," Hawk-eye "survey[s], with secret satisfaction, the *faded colour* of his bony and sinewy hand" (p. 31, emphasis added). In the Delaware village Magua identifies Hawk-eye as "one whose skin is neither red nor pale" (p. 291). Claiming that he "has no cross in his blood," Hawk-eye himself acknowledges that he has "lived with the red skins long enough to be suspected" of having the very cross he denies (p. 35). Mixed with the Mohicans, he is the "medium" and "link" between the white and red races (p. 348)—a perfect cultural cross.[22] Bronzed by the sun and mixed with his Mohican "brothers," Hawk-eye metaphorically embodies the racial cross the novel belies. He is, however, a masculine "medium," and hence Cooper reaffirms, as we will see, the impossibility of any racial mixing by reinscribing Burke's sexual distinction between the sublime and beautiful. For Cooper this sexual distinction signified that any crossing of the races was ultimately impossible.

The sexual distinction is paradoxically reaffirmed in the resolution of Cora's cross, for just as she is racially mixed, she also embodies a mix of masculine and feminine characteristics associated with Burke's sublime and beautiful—a mix that is thematically illusive. Cooper eventually crosses out the foreign union of male and female principles, but first he estab

[22] Cf. Cooper's 1850 "Preface to the Leather-Stocking Tales," in *The Leatherstocking Tales, Volume 2*, ed. Blake Nevius (New York: Library of America, 1985), pp. 489–9-

lishes Cora's beautiful, sublime mix by distinguishing her from Alice.

The two women are, of course, archetypal contrasts. Alice is fair and blond, pristine and white, while Cora has "dark" beauty—a darkness that Cooper envelops with racial significance, since Cora's mother was a remote descendant of black slaves. The two women, however, represent white beauty threatened by the red sublime, and there is an additional, albeit subsidiary, context of chivalry and damsels in distress.[23] Burke was, of course, also famous (or infamous) for his celebration of chivalry and his defense of distressed queens in *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (1790), but, more pertinent, a chivalric context grounds his discussion of "weak," defenseless beauty in the *Enquiry*, a beauty that must be cherished and protected. Specifically with regard to Alice, Cooper would have found Burke's discussion of affecting female beauty relevant: beauty in the female sex "almost always carries with it an idea of weakness," and "beauty in distress is much the most affecting beauty" (*Enquiry*, p. 110). Burke adds that "an air of robustness and strength is very prejudicial to beauty. An appearance of *delicacy*, and even of fragility, is almost essential to it. The beauty of women is considerably owing to their weakness or delicacy, and is even enhanced by their timidity, a quality of mind analogous to it" (p. 116). This certainly pertains to the weak and shrinking Alice, who throughout *Mohicans* is a damsel in distress (see, for instance, pp. 110, 117, 316).

Nearly every critic, however, has noticed the contrast between Alice's "white" weakness and Cora's "dark" strength. In the July 1826 *North American Review* W. H. Gardiner noted:

> The respective characters of these young ladies are as opposite as their complexions. Alice is timid and sensitive, always

See *Mohicans*, pp. 129, 149–50; W. H. Gardiner, rev. of *The Pioneers* and *The Last of the Mohicans*, *North American Review* 23 (1826), rpt. in *Fenimore Cooper: The Critical Heritage*, ed. George Dekker and John P. McWilliams (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1973), p. 109; and John P. McWilliams, "Red Satan: Cooper and the American Indian Epic," in *James Fenimore Cooper: New Critical Essays*, ed. Robert Clark (Totowa, N.J.: Barnes and Noble Books, 1985), p. 151.

> shrinking and shrieking at the approach of danger, while Cora is quite a bold young woman, and makes rather free, we think, with the savages. This, probably, she felt the better title to do, in respect of the dark blood which flowed in her own veins.
>
> (*Critical Heritage*, p. 110)[24]

Although Cooper makes Alice conventionally beautiful (blond and "weakly" feminine), he suggests a fusion of Cora's "beauty" with sublime strength (*Mohicans*, pp. 19, 342). In his 1826 review Gardiner intuits that it is Cora's dark blood that accounts for her boldness, and Cooper, in this context, briefly endeavored to envision a mixing or marrying of the races—rationalized by Cora's racial "cross"—accounting for the mutual, yet sublimated, attraction of both Cora and Uncas. Cora is decisive, brave, and protective of Alice; she confronts Magua, magnanimously insists that Hawk-eye and the Mohicans save themselves, leaves a trail by which she and Alice can be followed, and dies heroically at the novel's end (see pp. 78, 102, 108, 112, 142, 149, 158, 178). Her dark beauty contains a suggestively sublime-and-beautiful mix, explaining her "bold" beauty. Cooper conveys this mix by again employing contrastable adjectives. Cora's "countenance" is "exquisitely regular and dignified, and surpassingly beautiful" (p. 19). She momentarily "maintain[s] a secret ascendancy over the fierce [Magua] by the collected and feminine dignity of her presence" (p. 104). Beauty, Burke noted, was more lovely, "though inferior in dignity" to the sublime (*Enquiry*, p. 111).

Critics who have dismissed Cooper's gendered females have missed, I believe, his attempt to envision a new American heroine in a double mix of races, expressed in the cultural language of the sublime and beautiful—in a blending of traditional male and female characteristics—as a marriage of boldness with beauty, white, feminine dignity with red, "feminine" sublimity. In Cooper's novels the beautiful Indian women (e.g. Dew of June in *The Pathfinder* [1840]) are usually more bold and robust than their white counterparts—forced by the rigors of a public life in the wilderness to participate in rough, "mas-

[24] In the *Enquiry* dark colors are sublime, light colors are beautiful (pp. 81–82).

culine" activities, which serve as an ideological contrast to the private, domestic life associated with "white," gendered femininity. In *Mohicans* Cooper gives Cora a touch of Indian sublime femininity—a bold beauty—which he then revises into a beautiful (white) Christian sublimity. After Cora's death the Delaware maidens sing of "her matchless beauty. . . . That she was of a blood purer and richer than the rest of her nation, any eye might have seen. That she was *equal to the dangers and daring of a life in the woods, her conduct had proved*" (pp. 342–43, emphasis added). The Delaware maidens first place Cora's beauty in a racially relative context—her dark blood makes her "purer" than white females such as Alice, who is as weakly white and "pure" as "flakes of snow, . . . and as liable to melt in the fierce heats of summer, or congeal in the frosts of winter" (p. 343). In contrast, Cora's dark strength, her Indian sublimity, makes her additionally superior to white beauty and "equal" to sharing "the dangers . . . of a life in the woods" with Uncas just like a "true" Indian wife.

The last statement is in context of Cora's previous proven "conduct," but even as the Delaware maidens attempt to Indianize Cora, her feminine, Indian sublimity is softened by their reminder that Uncas is her sexual superior. "They advised her to be attentive to the wants of her companion, and never to forget the *distinction* which the Manitto had so wisely established between them" (p. 343, emphasis added). In this formulation Cora is "like" an Indian woman who resembles her man (equally sharing danger) but who is nevertheless his sexual subordinate. The androgynous mix that Cooper saw in Indian women and that he refigures in Cora's mix was grounded, nevertheless, on a Burkean (aesthetic) distinction between the sexes and further "whitened" by Cora's Christian sublimity, which the nineteenth-century man or woman would have read in context of the feminine and Christian bravery associated with white women in captivity narratives.

In *Mohicans* Cooper subverts the Indian maidens' eulogy by killing and then separating Cora and Uncas: the racial and aesthetic union is never consummated, except in the "imaginary" Indian heaven that the Delaware women evoke but that the narrator, through Hawk-eye, dismisses as a beautiful Indian illu-

sion (pp. 343–44). Cora actually dies in a pious act of Christian sacrifice, killed while she is praying to her God, and thus Cooper reclaims her sublime beauty for his white nineteenth-century audience.

It was the broached possibility of a variety of mixes, however, mediated through Cooper's refiguring of Burke's *Enquiry*, that makes Cora the haunting possibility of what never was. Although the Delaware marriage (in an "illusory" Indian heaven) of the sublime and beautiful is never consummated, we can see that Cooper was correspondingly contrasting Cora's sublimity to Alice's beauty by evoking Burke's aesthetic language. Consider the response of the white men to both women: Alice is loved while Cora is admired. While the impartial narrator considers both women's beauty separate yet equal (Alice is "fairer, though certainly not more beautiful"), Duncan obviously disagrees, since he is in love with Alice, while he regards Cora "with open admiration" (p. 22). In the *Enquiry* Burke noted that beauty "inspire[s] us with sentiments of tenderness and affection" (p. 43), while "the inferior effects" of the sublime "are admiration, reverence and respect" (p. 57). Thus "we submit to what we admire, but we love what submits to us" (p. 113). Cooper fleshes out the Burkean distinction between love and admiration again when Duncan, in chapter 15, says farewell to "noble" Cora, whom he knows "will be an ornament and honour to your sex"—i.e., Cora possesses both beauty and sublimity.[25] Turning to Alice, however, Duncan's "tone changed from admiration to tenderness" (p. 150).

Commenting on this passage, Nina Baym notes that "to admire is to think highly of" a person who is not dependent and needs no help, while "tenderness is the solicitude and concern

[25] In the *Enquiry* the sublime virtues are "fortitude, justice, wisdom, and the like" (p. 110); in Burke's speech "On American Taxation" (1774) the "great and masculine virtues" are "constancy, gravity, magnanimity, fortitude, fidelity, and firmness" ("Speech on American Taxation," in *The Writings and Speeches of Edmund Burke, Volume 2: Party, Parliament, and the American Crisis*, ed. Paul Langford [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981], p. 458)—virtues that *mutatis mutandis* make Cora admired, respected, and honored in *Mohicans*. Cf. Duncan's contrast between Cora and Alice: "To you, Cora, I will urge no words of idle encouragement; your own fortitude and undisturbed reason will teach you all that may become your sex; but cannot we dry the tears of that trembling weeper on your bosom?" (*Mohicans*, p. 82).

called out in a stronger person by the appeal of one who is weaker."[26] Burke would have agreed, and Cooper uses the recognizable language of the sublime (admiration) to elicit a harmonious blend of the sublime and beautiful in Cora, the product of mixed races. Baym notes, however, that Alice survives, while Cora dies

> Thus, it would seem, Alice's very tenderness and softness, her constant need to be tended, watched over, taken care of, finally save her, but Cora's very strength, her firmness, boldness, fortitude, and thoughtfulness have the opposite result. A woman's weakness *is* her strength in the white world, because it inspires men like Duncan, representative of European-American civilization, to fight for her. (p. 77)

Although this gender ideology is at work in the beautiful white women of Cooper's novels, Cora's death in *Mohicans* is not related to the fact that Cooper cannot conceive of a feminine sublime in the New World; rather, the reason that Cora's death is linked thematically with the last of the Mohicans is because Cora is the crucial link between an impossible marriage of sublime and beautiful cultures. As in other scenes in which a mixing of the sublime and beautiful is revealed to be a deceptive illusion, Cora's death is related to this impossible racial mixing, and Cooper's rethinking of Burke's aesthetic categories allows him to resolve imaginatively the "end" of Indian beauty.

The novel's reaffirmed "distinction" could only be contradicted by the cross-mixing of the races, by the mixing of feminine and masculine principals (Cora and Uncas). Cooper hence killed off the mixed feminine principle and its belated pure red counterpart by returning to the eternal distinction between the sexes. This can be specifically understood in context of the Indian heaven (and the imaginative, natural union of Uncas and Cora) that Cooper rejects with a dismissive shake of Hawk-eye's head. In their funeral lament the Delaware women evoke a beautiful, heavenly world where Uncas (who has preferred a woman of another race) and Cora will be reunited, but their lament causes Hawk-eye, a "white" man who

[26] "How Men and Women Wrote Indian Stories," in *New Essays on "The Last of the Mohicans,"* p. 76.

repeatedly insists that he is "unmixed" and without a racial "cross" (see pp 35, 63, 183, 192, 207, 265, 269, 274), to shake his head contradictorily, "like one who knew the error of their simple creed" (p 344) Through Hawk-eye, Cooper also dismisses the women's beautiful illusion, dispelling the possibility of *any* racial or mythic mixing and hence validating what seemed to be, in the nineteenth century, an eternal distinction between the races

Hawk-eye, however, had previously made himself the racial exception in his speculation about an Indian heaven where he and the Mohicans might be united He asks Duncan if he believes "that the heaven of a red-skin, and of us whites, will be one and the same?" After Duncan replies affirmatively, Hawk-eye proclaims "I believe that paradise is ordained for happiness, and that men will be indulged in it according to their dispositions and gifts"—hence "a red-skin is not far from the truth, when he believes he is to find them glorious hunting grounds of which his traditions tell " Such a heaven, he tells Duncan, would not be a "disparagement to a man without a cross, to pass his time" (pp 191–92) Although Hawk-eye is interrupted at this point, he soon completes his thought "For myself . it would be no great indulgence to be kept shut up in those mansions of which they preach [i e , the conventional "white" Christian heaven], having a natural longing for motion and the chase" (p 192) In essence Hawk-eye rejects the notion of a heaven common to both races and imaginatively crosses over to the Indian heaven, given his "disposition" and "*gifts*"—the thematic word he repeatedly uses to distinguish between the white and red races with regard to their separate cultural habits and talents. Suddenly, his disposition and gifts are those of his Mohican brothers

Later, when he believes he will soon be killed by Hurons, Hawk-eye tells Uncas that he has "loved both you and your father though our skins are not *altogether* of a colour" and that "whether there be one heaven or two, there is a path in the other world, by which honest men may come together, again (p 315, emphasis added) Again, at the novel's end, Hawk-eye "deserted by all of his colour, return[s] to the spot" where Uncas is buried—a spot "where his own sympathies led him

with a force that no ideal bond of union could bestow" (p 348) He then tells the childless Chingachgook that he is "not alone" "The gifts of our colours may be different, but God has so placed us as to journey in the same path" (p 349) Cooper imaginatively posits a masculine "path" and "heaven" where a (crossed) white man can reunite with his Indian brothers, but in "real" history he denies the physical possibility of any sexual, racial resolution by reinscribing Burke's distinction—a distinction that underwrites Cooper's meditation of race in the New World

Indeed, shortly after Hawk-eye, with a shake of his head, has dismissed the Delaware maidens' beautiful illusion of an Indian heaven where Uncas and Cora may meet, he informs them that Cora's spirit does not need their attention "the spirit of a pale-face has no need of food or raiment—their gifts being according to the heaven of their colour" (p 346) Cooper, however, then proceeds to consider for the last time the possibility of racial resolution in a (Christian) heaven common to all It is significant that Munro, the man who lamented Scotland's "unnatural union" while proudly acknowledging Cora's racial cross, is the person who asks the bilingual Hawk-eye to thank the Delaware maidens and to "tell them, that the Being we all worship, under different names, will be mindful of their charity, and that the time shall not be distant, when we may assemble around his throne, without *distinction* of sex, or rank, or colour!" (p 347, emphasis added) Hawk-eye again shakes his head, "as one who doubted" the "efficacy" of Munro's words Although Hawk-eye informs Munro that the maidens (who previously insisted on sexual distinction in their illusive Indian heaven) could not possibly comprehend or believe such a concept, his second headshake evokes the first, as Munro's equalitarian Christianity is suggestively rejected in the same way that Hawk-eye contradicted "the error of [the Delaware maidens'] simple creed" (p 344)

In his contemplation of sex and race Cooper was writing "out" the problem of the "Other," which he attempted to resolve through Cora, who represents the imaginative reconciliation of all races (white, red, and black) in the New World Cora is the potential "mother" of this racial resolution, and it is her "remote" (and suppressed) black blood—the blood that the

Indians racially misidentify as red beauty—that makes her the crucial link (Hawk-eye's feminine antithesis) between the white and red races. The death of Cora is hence at one with the last of the Mohicans: the suppression of the feminine link corresponds to the suppression of Cooper's beautiful Indians—removed or destroyed by the pressing reality of sublime, white civilization.

There is, as we have seen, a red sublime—the terrorist Hurons. And the Delaware warriors are also protectively sublime in their annihilatory war against the novel's bad Indians, as is Uncas in his chivalrous, albeit futile, defense of distressed beauty. But with the removal of red terror and the farewell to the "last" of the good Indians, Cooper's message is that alien Indian beauty is fleeting and that the mixing of races is illusory. With the removal of red terror, of the red sublime, Cooper indulges in a sentimental farewell to the Indian beauty that cannot historically withstand the pressing reality and power of "sublime" white civilization. The novel's final message is that all versions of the red sublime (threatening or protective), all Indian powers, have ceased to exist. Cooper and his readers could hence bid a sentimental farewell to the "last" of the Mohicans and the "beautiful" Indian culture that could not resist the "progressive" power of "sublime" white civilization. Cooper could thus suggest, in 1826, that white punitive power was historically destined to destroy terrorist red power and that, vis-a-vis progressive white civilization, the protective Indian sublime was defenselessly "beautiful"—destined to die "naturally" or to be removed to protective white spaces. Cooper and his readers were thus culturally blind to a subversive Indian reading of white civilization in terms of white terror.

I return in this context to Burke via Joel Porte, who refers to epic parallels in *Mohicans*: "Cooper's world is divided between wily Greeks and noble Trojans (Mingoes and Delawares)"; "the last chapter of the book, in which Chingachgook/Priam, along with the remaining members of his tribe, celebrates and mourns the death of Uncas/Hector, is obviously patterned after the twenty-fourth book of Homer's epic, the funeral of Hector. . . . With [the death of Uncas] Cooper commemorates

the disappearance of his beau ideal of the Indian, the splendid Lenni Lenape."[27]

In addition, Cooper's depiction of the Trojan Delawares may have been inspired by Burke's comments on Homer in the *Enquiry*:

> It may be observed, that Homer has given the Trojans, whose fate he has designed to excite our compassion, infinitely more of the amiable social virtues than he has distributed among his Greeks. With regard to the Trojans, the passion he chuses to raise is pity; pity is a passion founded on love. . . . Admiration is the passion which Homer would excite in favour of the Greeks; and he has done it by bestowing on them the virtues which have but little to do with love. (pp. 158–59)

In this context *Mohicans* is not ultimately about Trojan Delawares and Greek Mingoes, for the Delawares destroy the Mingoes. Cooper's "beau idéal" is of beautiful Trojan Delawares "removed" by sublime, white Greeks, for it is the white race that Cooper sees as the historical cause of the last of the Mohicans, the end of a beautiful Indian empire. The closing words of the novel, pronounced by Tamenund, recognize the impending and pressing power of white civilization: "The pale-faces are masters of the earth . . . [and he has] lived to see the last warrior of the wise race of the Mohicans!" (p. 350; cf. pp. 30, 288–89, 304–5).

Although Tamenund briefly fantasizes about the possible return of red power ("the time of the red-men has not yet come again" [p. 350]), the cultural significance of *Mohicans* is that this too is a beautiful, deceptive illusion, for Cooper realizes that the red sublime has disappeared, destroyed or removed,[28] existing only in a past that the white nineteenth-century reader may enjoy aesthetically—safely removed from a power no longer

[27] Joel Porte, *The Romance in America: Studies in Cooper, Poe, Hawthorne, Melville, and James* (Middletown, Conn.: Wesleyan Univ. Press, 1969), p. 40; cf. McWilliams, *Red S[illegible]*, pp. 144–50, 152, 156.

[28] In *Notions of the Americans* (1828) Cooper gave qualified support to the policy of Indian removal (see *Notions of the Americans: Picked Up by a Travelling Bachelor*, ed. Gary Williams [New York: State Univ. of New York Press, 1991], letter 34, pp. 486, 489–90).

dangerous or threatening. Since the pressing power of the red sublime had been either destroyed or removed, Cooper could imaginatively sympathize with the Indians' decline and demise, allowing the reader the luxury of sentimental indulgence in a wistful farewell to "good" Indian beauty. Twice removed, through the fiction of the novel as well as the reality of 1826, the reader could safely participate in Cooper's nostalgic farewell to a "beau idéal."

I have suggested that Burke's gendered distinctions between the sublime and beautiful provided Cooper a context through which he could envision the confrontation of races, and while Cooper imaginatively considered a marriage of the sublime and beautiful—in an amalgamation and reconciliation of the races—in the end the historical reality was too powerful for his beautiful fiction.[29] There is, Burke had remarked, "an eternal distinction" between the sublime and beautiful, "a distinction never to be forgotten by any whose business it is to affect the passions" (*Enquiry*, p. 124). While Cooper contemplates a mixing of races, in the end he returns to Burke's eternal distinction through the erasure of the racial, sexual "Other."

In retrospect, *The Last of the Mohicans* is a novel of complicitous combinations, of fatal and fruitful mixes, of links and unions, comprising a series of covert traces telling a secret story contradicting Cooper's overt racial ideology.[30] Yet it is this

[29] Burke himself had acknowledged that the sublime and beautiful might occasionally be mixed, although their identities must remain distinct, and that the sublime suffers less by being united with beauty than vice versa (*Enquiry*, pp. 42, 156–57). Cooper perhaps entertained Burke's aesthetic exception before returning to his rigid distinction. Burke's concluding commentary in section 27 of the *Enquiry* constitutes a latent subtext for Cooper's novel and the imaginative absorption of the *Enquiry* into the context of *Mohicans*: "If the qualities of the sublime and beautiful are sometimes found united, does this prove, that they are the same; does it prove, that they are any way allied, does it prove even that they are not opposite and contradictory? Black and white may soften, may blend, but they are not therefore the same. Nor when they are so softened and blended with each other, or with different colours, is the power of black as black, or of white as white, so strong as when each stands uniform and distinguished" (pp. 124–25).

[30] For a discussion of a variety of other racial, sexual, and cultural "crossings," see Shirley Samuels, "Generation through Violence: Cooper and the Making of Americans," in *New Essays on "The Last of the Mohicans,"* pp. 87–114. Two recent books contribute to our historical understanding of *The Last of the Mohicans*: Geoffrey Rans, *Cooper's Leather-stocking Novels: A Secular Reading* (Chapel Hill: Univ. of North Carolina

"pristine" ideology that finally overpowers and double-crosses the novel's "other" message. The "natural" differences of sex and race coincide with condemnations of "unnatural" unions, potential amalgamation evokes pejorative miscegenation. By reinscribing Burke's aesthetic distinction in order to reconfirm the "inevitable" historical separation of the races, Cooper reaffirmed a racial ideology tortured with its own historical ambiguities. Written in 1826, at a specific historical moment when the Indian tribes were being removed or destroyed, the novel's anxious ambiguities—its tensions and ambivalences—reflect the contradictions and ambiguities of Cooper's American culture. Writing the problem of the Other "out"—in the sense of simultaneous exposure and erasure—Cooper's meditation on the burdensome cross of history makes his mixed *Mohicans* a crucial text for the significance of culture and race in the nineteenth century.

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Press, 1991) and John McWilliams, "*The Last of the Mohicans*": *Civil Savagery and Savage Civility* (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1995).

Adoption and the "Improvement of the Estate" in Trollope and Craik

JESS O'TOOLE

> Adoption strives with nature and choice breeds
> A native slip to us from foreign seeds
>
> —*All's Well That Ends Well* (I, iii)

DESPITE the well-documented preoccupation in the Victorian novel with the tracing of origin and descent, a surprising number of family plots in novels of this period pivot on a disruption or alteration in the genealogical line, in the person of the adopted child Heathcliff, the most notorious adoptee of the Victorian novel, illustrates a recurrent paradox the family saga depends on the importation of the nonfamiliar in order to set in motion its own plot [1] Nineteenth-century fiction engages in an affirmation of the family that is inseparable from the reconfiguration of the family it displays The family's confrontation with or absorption of outside forces serves both narratological and ideological imperatives, while the introduction of an element of difference is a catalyst to plot, the family's reconstitution also allows the novelist to represent the broader social reconfigurations transform-

[1] D H Lawrence's family saga *The Rainbow* (1815) illustrates the same maxim The child through whom the family line and the narrative line are transmitted is an adopted daughter Anna Brangwen is a product of her mother's first marriage to Paul Lensky

ing Victorian society. Though the marriage plot is the novel's most familiar vehicle for reshaping the family, the adoption plot is a prominent alternative (and sometimes intersecting) paradigm.[2] The growing cultural currency of discourses of the family in the nineteenth century invested the traditional foundling plot with new potential.

In the family plots of Victorian fiction, orphans are taken in or children are removed from one family to another according to a wide variety of arrangements. In *Bleak House* (1852–53) Jarndyce becomes guardian to Esther Summerson; in *Great Expectations* (1860–61) Miss Havisham rears Magwitch's daughter Estella in order to enact her own revenge plot; in *Daniel Deronda* (1876) Sir Hugo Mallinger keeps his promise to Alcharisi to raise her son as an English gentleman in his own household; in *Doctor Thorne* (1858) the eponymous hero swears on the Bible that his brother's illegitimate daughter will be to him as his own child; in *Felix Holt* (1866) Reverend Lyon raises his French wife's child, Esther, as his daughter. The various nature of these "adoptions" reflects the fact that legal adoptions did not exist in England (until the passage of the Adoption Act in 1926), despite the fact that de facto adoption was a not uncommon practice in the nineteenth century.[3] The lack of a legal framework with which to legitimize an adoption made such reconfigurations of the family both more flexible and more tenuous than modern adoptions and, thus, arguably more closely aligned with fiction than would otherwise be the case. As a "jural fiction,"[4] moreover, even a legal adoption act shares some of the affinities to the fictive that Tony Tanner locates in marriage as a contractual rather than a sanguinally based form of kinship.[5] The

[2] The similar novelistic potential of the two events is reflected in the frequent intertwining of adoption plots with marriage plots, in the manner of Austen's *Mansfield Park*, where the adopted cousin Fanny marries her "brother" Edmund.

[3] See T. F. James, "The Illegitimate and Deprived Child: Legitimation and Adoption," in *A Century of Family Law, 1857–1957*, ed. R. H. Graveson and F. R. Crane (London: Sweet and Maxwell, 1957), p. 46.

[4] The term is Julian Pitt-Rivers's: "Adoption involves a jural fiction which is accompanied by a social fiction to a greater or lesser extent" ("The Kith and the Kin," in *The Character of Kinship*, ed. Jack Goody [Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1973], p. 95).

[5] See *Adultery in the Novel: Contract and Transgression* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1979), p. 16.

reconfiguration of natural arrangements that adoption effects parallels the remaking of the world in which fiction engages; as Susan R. Cohen notes in an essay on *Silas Marner* (1861), "Adoption [is] a model for creative human action, for the power of human fictions to displace and reshape reality."[6] This description suggests why adoption, like marriage, is a privileged event in fiction.

The particular importance of adoption to the Victorian novel lies in adoption's relationship to the rather antithetical impulses that the Victorian family plot displays. The drive to preserve and defend the family and to safeguard its integrity is balanced by the need to revitalize the family, the need for blood regeneration. The adoption act is critically placed in relation to both of these imperatives. The adoptee can inject needed new material and vitality into the family; thus in Dinah Craik's *King Arthur, Not a Love Story* (1866) the narrator comments on the adopted child: "Perhaps both his adopted parents loved him all the better for being so unlike themselves—for bringing into their quiet household new elements which otherwise would have been unknown there."[7] Alternatively, the adoptee can be the entirely unassimilable other whose difference threatens to destroy the family. These two possibilities accord with the comic and tragic paradigms that Patricia Howe identifies in the novel of adoption:

> Literary adoptions fall into two groups, those in which the adopted child not only flourishes in the care of its new parents, or more often parent, but consoles and redeems these parents, forging lost links with a wider world, with the world of nature and the community of men, and those who bring chaos and disaster not only to themselves, indeed they may be least touched by them, but to those who take them into their families.[8]

In both kinds of adoption novels, however, the repercussions of the adoption act frequently extend beyond the family. Adop-

[6] "A History and a Metamorphosis: Continuity and Discontinuity in *Silas Marner*," *Texas Studies in Literature and Language*, 25 (1983), 416.

[7] Dinah Maria Mulock Craik, *King Arthur: Not a Love Story* (London: MacMillan, 1886), p. 137. All subsequent references to this text refer to this edition and are indicated parenthetically.

[8] "Fontane's 'Ellernklipp' and the Theme of Adoption," *Modern Language Review*, 79 (1984), 121.

tion can serve as a model—either metaphoric or prescriptive—for the regrouping of society. In Trollope's *Doctor Thorne* adoption is the key to a social mobility that benefits not just the individual but the community at large.

While the many instances of adoption in the Victorian novel are no doubt symptomatic of the culture's faith in the family unit as the framework in which an individual might best develop, I am less interested in the child's experience of the remolding of his or her identity under adoption than I am in the remolding of the family's character through the adoption act. I focus on the intersection of the comic adoption plot with what Alistair M. Duckworth, in his study of Austen, terms "the improvement of the estate" theme.[9] The view of adoption as a means to restore the family and the estate recalls the fact that in the Roman empire, where legal adoption first flourished, the practice was motivated not by a concern with child welfare but by the imperative to control heirship. "Adoption was made use of for the purpose of handing on honours and estates to adopted children deemed more fitted to make good use of them than the natural children."[10] One of the elder Seneca's *Controversiae* addresses the desire of a wealthy citizen to adopt a poor man's child after disinheriting his own sons; his position is explained thus: "That is how the nobility of the patricians has survived to this day from the founding of the city. Adoption is the remedy for Chance."[11] Likewise, in the Victorian adoption plots that I discuss below, the diversion of the genetic line serves a conservative agenda; the process of adoption safeguards the estate and, by extension, the nation.

Property issues loom large in Victorian adoption plots. In *Felix Holt*, for example, the most significant repercussion of the exposure of Esther Lyon's adoption is the fact that the Transomes might lose their estate. Heathcliff's scheme to take over family estates in *Wuthering Heights* (1847) reflects contempo-

[9] See *The Improvement of the Estate: A Study of Jane Austen's Novels* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1971).

[10] William Clarke Hall and Justin Clarke Hall, "Introduction," *The Law of Adoption and Guardianship of Infants, with Special Reference to Courts of Summary Jurisdiction* (London: Butterworth and Co., 1928), p. 4.

[11] The Elder Seneca, *Controversiae*, in *Declamations*, ed. and trans. M. Winterbottom, 2 vols. (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1974), I: 223.

rary fears about the potential of adoption to disturb traditional inheritance patterns. Charlotte Yonge's 1859 adoption novel, *Hopes and Fears*, directly addresses this concern with adoption's impact on the transmission of property. The spinster heroine, who inherits adoptive children from one suitor and an estate from another (her cousin), feels that it would be unethical to leave the property to the adopted son she adores because she received it in trust from someone unrelated to him. The potential of adoption to disrupt property transmission, "the fundamental problem associated with the concept of legal adoption in [England]," contributed to the late advent of legal adoption there.[12] (The first Adoption Act, passed in 1926, specified that the adoptee would not lose his rights of succession within the natal family, nor would the adoption automatically accord him rights of inheritance in the adoptive family.) In a number of Victorian adoption plots, countermodels to *Wuthering Heights*, this concern over the adoptees' potential to encroach on property is overridden by the fact that they turn out to be the most worthy stewards available for the family estate; these novels tend to demonstrate as well that it is the adoptions that have made them so. In the adoption plots I discuss below, the reconfiguration of the family through adoption ultimately serves the estate and the traditional values for which it stands.[13]

In 1886 the popular novelist and conduct-book writer Dinah Mulock Craik, herself an adoptive mother,

[12] Alan Teague, *Social Change, Social Work, and the Adoption of Children* (Aldershot, Hants: Avebury Press, 1989), p. 65.

[13] While I will be focusing in this essay primarily on the adoption plot in Trollope's *Doctor Thorne*, this concern for the succession of property along traditional lines is prominent in his *Ralph the Heir* (1871). There are two Ralphs, a legitimate nephew and an illegitimate son, who are each at different times the expected heir of Newton Priory. While the son Ralph is clearly the worthier man, the better steward for the estate, his father's efforts to secure his property for his illegitimate son rather than for his legitimate nephew are regarded by the community as misguided. This is evidenced by their response to the twist of fate through which the squire dies before the transfer has been finalized: "The tenants, though they all liked the Squire's son, were not upon the whole ill-pleased [that the nephew Ralph inherited the estate]. It was in proper conformity with English habits and English feelings that the real heir should reign. . . . According

published a *roman à these* illustrating the advantages of wise adoption, a novel that, Sally Mitchell notes in her study of the author, is devised for the purpose of "reveal[ing] the problems caused by lack of an adoption law."[14] *King Arthur Not a Love Story* tells the story of the Trevenas, a childless, middle-aged couple who adopt the unwanted infant son of a wealthy woman they encounter in a Swiss resort A pitch for the institution of legal adoption is made through the character of the American doctor who delivers the baby and who negotiates his transfer from the negligent birth mother to the eminently maternal Susannah Trevena. Discussing the process by which they might take the child, the doctor informs them

> "In my country, where every man stands on his own feet, where we have neither the curse of primogeniture, nor the burthen of hereditary rank, any respectable person, or any married couple, agreeing together, can legally adopt a child by presenting a petition to one of our courts of law, and after due examination of the parents, if alive and deserving, and of the child, if old enough, obtaining a decree of adoption which makes it the adopting parents' lawful heir, and the real parents have no more right over it" (p 40)

Craik's novel addresses the widely held fears that fed the resistance to institutionalizing adoption. One of Austin Trevena's neighboring clergymen, for instance, castigates his colleague for "bringing a nameless child, possibly the offspring of sin and shame, into a respectable and above all a clergyman's household" and asks, "what would the Trevenas say?" (p. 82) Trevena's profligate brother perceives the adopted child as a competitor, scolding his brother for taking in someone else's

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to their way of thinking, personally popular as was the other man, it was clearly better that a legitimate descendant of the old family should be installed at Newton Priory The old Squire's son rode well to hounds, and was loved by all but nothing that all the world could do on his behalf would make him Newton of Newton' (*Ralph the Heir*, ed John Sutherland, 2 vols in 1 [New York Oxford Univ Press, 1990], II 85–86) While tradition prevails in the working-out of the plot, the fact that it is only one Ralph's legitimate birth that makes him—and not the other Ralph—the novel's eponymous "hero" qualifies the ease we derive from Trollope's happy ending, and the amused acceptance with which the narrator regards his "hero's" good fortune is not free of irony

[14] *Dinah Mulock Craik* (Boston Twayne Publishers, 1983), p 77

child when he has a blood relative who could use any money he has to spare.[15] On the part of the adoptive parents, too, there is an assumption that an adopted child's relationship to his parents' property is problematic. Arthur is expected to make his own way, through scholarships, though his adoptive mother dotes on him; she concedes: "Her husband in his old age would need all his own money; he must not be stinted in anything for the sake of a son—who was not his son. Passionately as she loved her boy, Susannah held the balance of justice even" (p. 142). Even the doctor who advocated adoption tells the boy that his adoptive father's money should go to educating his niece rather than him, "because, you see, she is his own flesh and blood, and you—" (p. 224). Fears about the potential of adoption to disrupt both bloodlines and property transmission are assuaged, however, by the success story of Arthur's adoption, which ultimately serves to revitalize both the families and the property.

Arthur is not illegitimate; rather, he is the legitimate son of a wealthy woman who bore him in secret and gave him away because she despised her husband and had no maternal feelings.[16] That husband, physically and morally weak, afraid of his devious wife but unaware of her deception, inherits the large estate in the Trevena's neighborhood. When the truth about Arthur's parentage is made public upon his natal father's death, Arthur becomes heir to the estate. His healthy body, sound mind, and virtuous character, all cultivated by the middle-class upbringing his adoption has secured him and all contrasting sharply with the characteristics of his father and of his aris-

[15] In *Ralph the Heir* this issue presses on the conscience of a father of two daughters who decides to adopt his orphaned niece: "That question of adopting is very difficult. If a man have no children of his own, . . . he can give all, and there is an end of his trouble. But a man feels that he owes his property to his children, and, so feeling, may he take it from them and give it to others? Had she been in truth his daughter, he would have felt that there was enough for three; but she was not his daughter, and yet he was telling her that she should be to him the same as a child of his house" (I, 84). This dilemma does not arise in *Doctor Thorne*, where Mary is the only issue of Thorne's branch of the family.

[16] Arthur's mother matches Daniel Deronda's in her unmaternal instincts. Another echo of George Eliot's adoption plot is the fact that Arthur, like Daniel, has a splendid voice that leads him to speculate that his biological mother was probably on the stage.

tocratic relatives, make him the best possible steward for the Damerel estate. When Arthur was a toddler, his true parentage still unknown, his adoptive mother compared him to the present Damerel heir: "Her boy, . . . blossoming day by day into rosy infancy . . . was happier than the heir of all the Damerels—a poor idiot, report said, never seen or heard of, whose family home was let, and the property put into Chancery, until his fortunate death cleared the way for some distant cousins, ready to fight over the title and estate like dogs over a bone" (p. 89). The Damerel estate is restored by Arthur, who "conscientiously spen[ds] every forenoon in his study with his steward, repairing much evil that had come about in his father's days, and planning no end of good that was to be done in his own" (p. 325). His qualifications are attributed to his adoptive upbringing; after Susannah Trevena has died the narrator comments: "She had lived long enough to make her boy all that he was, to form his mind and character, heart and soul: to fit him for the aims and duties of life, high aims and serious duties, for Sir Arthur Damerel is not the sort of man to hide himself, or submit to be hidden under a bushel" (p. 335). The adoption of Arthur has benefited not only the Damerel family but society at large. The fact that Susannah named him after King Arthur, another foundling, drives home the point that Arthur's estate (located in Cornwall!) is to serve as a metonym for the nation. The nation will be healthier, Craik suggests, if adoption is institutionalized.

Arthur improves the Trevena family as well as the Damerels. Susannah is the last surviving member of her family, and her husband's family is in danger of dying out as well after the death of their infant son; his one brother's only child is a daughter. Arthur compares favorably not only with "the last of the Damerels" but with "the last of the Trevenas" as well—their mousy niece Nanny, whom they take in after her mother dies. Living in close proximity, Arthur and Nanny fall in love and marry; as in a number of adoption plots, the adopted child marries a member of the household, thus legalizing his or her place in the family. The understated Nanny blossoms when united to Arthur's brilliance, while her dutiful, self-effacing nature "give[s] the neighbourhood an entirely new and revised edition of the Lady Damerels of Tawton Abbas" (p. 335). As a

result of this match Arthur's descendants are sanguinally linked to the Trevenas. A family relation that could not be ratified by law will now be ratified by blood. Still, the adoption is seen as essential in the process of generational transmission; as Susannah lies dying, our attention is called to the fact that her "influence" (rather than her husband's blood) "will descend" to Arthur's grandchildren (p. 337).

While Sally Mitchell concludes that the revelation of Arthur's good birth and his inheritance of a handsome property have "the unfortunate effect of virtually destroying the story's point by making it seem that legitimate birth and inherited rank do matter a great deal after all" (pp. 77–78), in fact Arthur's inheritance reinforces Craik's polemic in favor of adoption: it is Arthur's adoption that has made him a worthy heir to the estate. This equation between adoption and the improvement of the estate is enacted as well in a number of more complex nineteenth-century adoption novels. When Arthur's adoptive mother compares him to a trodden piece of sweet william that she rescued and planted and that flourished, Craik draws on a familiar trope linking two types of "cultivation", as Patricia Howe notes: "Adoption is frequently seen as a process of domestication, running parallel to activities such as building and gardening. Successful adoptions become associated with civilized places, landscapes subtly ordered by man, whether they be great parks and houses . . . or tiny cottages and gardens" (p. 124). The metaphoric link between adoption and estate ordering works in harmony with the metonymic link between them that is forged when the adopted child becomes the key to the improvement of the estate.

While in *King Arthur: Not a Love Story* the heir to an estate must be adopted by another family in order to equip him to fulfill his birthright, in other adoption plots, such as *Mansfield Park* (1814) and *Doctor Thorne*, an estate is redeemed by an adopted child rather than by a member of the natal family. The difference in these cases is related to the gender of the protagonists. In *King Arthur* the mother frets over the fact that an adopted status is much more problematic for her son than it would have been for a daughter; she reflects that while "many a King Cophetua lives to bless the day he wooed his 'beggar-

naid,' and especially if she has no blood relations" (p. 146), a nale's value cannot inhere to as great a degree in his individual elf. (The feelings of adoptive parents are also gender-inflected n Craik's novel; Arthur's adopted status is assumed to make a lifference to the adoptive father that it does not make to the doptive mother.) The adoptive father in Trollope's novel hares Susannah Trevena's assumption about the difference ender makes, in an argument that recalls Mr. B's defense of is marriage to Pamela, Doctor Thorne comforts the illegitinate niece he has adopted by asserting "A man raises a woman o his own standard, but a woman must take that of the man she narries."[17] It would appear, then, that due to the greater malabilıty of the female's class identity, female adoption plots are articularly fitted to serve the improvement of the estate theme n *Doctor Thorne* the idea of adoption as a civilizing process and f the female as a civilizing agent become intertwined. Civilizaion works both ways in the adoption in Trollope's novel, it is eflected not only in the nurturing and education the adopted hild receives but also in the fact that the process of adopting a emale child recivilizes her bachelor uncle, leading him literlly to put his house in order:

> Mary was thirteen when she came to take up her permanent abode as mistress of the establishment. . . . This advent greatly changed the tenor of the doctor's ways. He had been before pure bachelor, not a room in his house had been comfortably furnished. . . . He had had no fixed hour for his meals. . . . But when Mary came . . . things were altogether changed at the doctor's. People had hitherto wondered . . . how a gentleman like Dr. Thorne could continue to live in so slovenly a manner. . . . [But] the doctor made a thorough revolution in his household, and furnished his house from the ground to the roof completely. He painted . . . he papered, he carpeted, and curtained, and mirrored, and linened . . . when Mary Thorne came home from her school at Bath . . . she found herself called upon to be the presiding genius of a perfect paradise. (pp. 38–39)

[17] Anthony Trollope, *Doctor Thorne*, ed. David Skilton (New York. Oxford Univ ress, 1980), p. 100. All subsequent references to this work refer to this edition and are dicated parenthetically.

The achievement of domestic order in the doctor's house-
iold that is occasioned by the arrival of Mary, "the angel who
ave to that home in Greshamsbury so many of the joys of Para-
lise" (p. 175), is complemented by the greater social integra-
ion to which the adoption leads Thorne. He is a fitting adopter
f the illegitimate child, for he is himself disenfranchised. It is
ot only his bachelorhood that reveals the doctor as a solitary
gure. A member of his family's junior branch, "only a second
ousin" to the Thornes of Ullathorne (p. 20), he is estranged
om his own relatives over a family quarrel. As a doctor, he oc-
upies an ambiguous and marginal position within the social
ierarchy of Barchester. He is in danger of misanthropic with-
rawal from society at the point when the adoption of Mary
ives him a domestic role and an incentive to participate in the
ommunity. The integration of Mary into the Thorne family via
er adoption, then, also produces the social reintegration of
ie doctor. And at another level, the adoption itself becomes
ie means to a renewed social cohesiveness; the twists in the in-
eritance plot serve this larger goal as much as they do Mary's
idividual happiness. Even the language Mary uses to articulate
ie nature of her relationship to the doctor—"people must be
ound together" (pp. 153, 177)—refers as well to the connec-
ons on which social order rests.

Doctor Thorne pivots on the adoption of the
egitimate Mary, daughter of a well-born but dissolute father
id a working-class mother, by her uncle, the novel's epony-
ous hero. The narrative begins, however, not with an account
the child's genesis but rather with an account of a region's
velopment. The region is agricultural Barsetshire, an area
o[t] so widely spoken of as some of its manufacturing levia-
an brethren in the north, but . . . nevertheless, very dear to
ose who know it well" (p. 1), where "the town population of
e county reckons for nothing" (p. 2). The narrator's descrip-
n becomes an occasion to extoll what he perceives as the tra-
ional English way of life.

> England is not yet a commercial country in the sense in which that epithet is used for her, and let us still hope that she will not soon become so. She might surely as well be called feudal England, or chivalrous England. If in western civilized Europe there does exist a nation among whom there are high signors, and with whom the owners of the land are the true aristocracy, the aristocracy that is trusted as being best and fittest to rule, that nation is the English. (p. 12)

Signs of social change and division are present, however: the Reform Bill has divided Barsetshire into east and west, Tory and Whig, and one of the first families of East Barsetshire, the Greshams, can no longer feel themselves so secure in their stronghold as formerly; the old family motto, "Gardez Gresham" (p. 11), no longer suggests "Beware of Gresham" so much as its alternate interpretation, "Beware, Gresham." This threat of decline is reflected in an instance of generational decline, for the current Squire Gresham has not been able to live up to the standard set by his father; assuming he would be a member of Parliament for Barsetshire all his life as his father before him was, he yet "failed to take any of the steps which had secured his father's seat" (p. 5). His failure of stewardship is reflected in the fact that expenses relative to a rapidly expanding family, an extravagant wife, repeated lost elections for parliament, and a stint as master of the hounds for the county have forced him to sell off part of the estate. The first episode in the novel is the coming of age of the squire's son; the celebration is notably smaller in scale than was his father's before him, and the villagers are no longer proud of their squire as they were at his twenty-first birthday. It is against this backdrop of a traditional order at risk and a failure of customary patterns of generational succession to secure it that the adoption plot featuring Mary Thorne is set.[18] Her adoption becomes intertwined with

[18] A number of critics have commented on Trollope's depiction of social change in *Doctor Thorne*; see esp. Robert M. Polhemus, *The Changing World of Anthony Trollope* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: Univ. of California Press, 1968), and James R. Kincaid, *The Novels of Anthony Trollope* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1977). What I am stressing is the importance of the heroine's adoption in figuring and controlling that change, and how this element makes Trollope's novel exemplary of a certain kind of Victorian adoption plot.

the recovery of the Greshamsbury estate, it is through the anomalies characterizing Mary's birth and nurture, and the inheritance that is attendant upon them, that the family will be able to "gardez Gresham."[19]

The preservation of the Gresham's estate and name is inseparable from the preservation of a nameless child. Pitying the "poor bastard whose father was already dead, and whose mother's family was such as the Scatcherds!" (p. 29), and the betrayed mother whose only chance of social salvation hinges on her leaving her child to marry and emigrate with a worthy suitor of her own class, Doctor Thorne initially takes charge of the baby out of compassion and a sense of duty. That act of rescue ultimately becomes the means to complete another rescue in which Thorne is engaged—that of Greshamsbury. For it is Mary's uncle Roger Scatcherd (who has amassed a fortune as a railway contractor) who buys a piece of the property that Gresham is forced to sell as well as advancing him money with the estate as security, and it is Thorne who acts as the go-between in these financial negotiations. Purportedly a neutral mediator, Thorne has Gresham's best interests at heart; for instance, he convinces Scatcherd to advance further money without demanding the title deeds to Greshamsbury by saying: "I thought you would have done as much to oblige me" (p. 170). When Scatcherd decides to leave his fortune, in the event of his son's death, to his sister's eldest child, it is Thorne who insists on the more specific designation of that heir. While his ostensible motive is to ensure that Scatcherd does not unwittingly leave it to his illegitimate niece over his sister's eldest legitimate child, his intervention does ensure that Mary will incontestably inherit the fortune. When he arranges for the marriage of Mary and Frank Gresham—a betrothal accompanied by the return to the Greshams of the title deeds to Boxhall Hall as well as all of Scatcherd's claims on the rest of the estate (whose value cancels out the liability of Mary's illegitimacy), Thorne completes the act of preserving Greshamsbury for the Greshams. Thus in

[19] On the significance of the estate motif in a range of Trollope's fiction, see Juliet McMaster, "Trollope's Country Estates," in *Trollope Centenary Essays*, ed. John Halperin (London: Macmillan, 1982), pp. 70–85.

Trollope's plot the salvation of the bastard baby and the salvaging of the estate are intertwined. Of course, Thorne's nurture of "his adopted bairn" (p. 148) and the intimacy with the family circle at Greshamsbury that it has secured her have served to make that child into a suitable bride for Frank Gresham. Her eligibility for the role is ensured by one uncle's fortune and the other's adoption.

Mary's adoption not only makes upward mobility possible for her but also equips her for it. In his study of Trollope's novels James Kincaid writes that *Doctor Thorne*, like *Framley Parsonage* (1861), involves "recruitment, bolstering the ranks of the good" (Kincaid, p. 95). Specifically, the marriage of the younger Frank Gresham to the illegitimate Mary Thorne illustrates the self-preserving flexibility of the class system. "The outside world must in a limited way be incorporated in order to avoid contamination. The principle is that of vaccination, and Mary is the perfect vaccine" (Kincaid, p. 117). However, a prior act of "incorporation" and "vaccination" makes that one not only possible but desirable, and that is Mary's adoption.[20] While Jane Nardin views marriage as the key to upward mobility in Trollope's novel,[21] mobility hinges more on the adoption than on the marriage; it is Mary's adoption that secures her access to polite society and the breeding necessary to fulfill her role as mistress of Greshamsbury. Through his intervention in her history Thorne ensures that Mary is raised with proper middle-class values and that she is kept quarantined from her working-class relatives. "Dr. Thorne, in undertaking to bring up the baby, did not choose to encounter any tie with persons who might hereafter claim to be the girl's relations on the other side" (p. 28). While Thorne's adoption of Mary is ratified as a

[20] The metaphor of "vaccination" is a resonant one in the context of adoption plots, for unassimilable adoptees like Heathcliff are sometimes figured as agents who infect or poison the family. In *Henry Esmond* (1852) the supposedly illegitimate Harry, who has been taken into the Castlewood family, infects the woman who calls herself his mother with the smallpox he has contracted by consorting with a working-class girl. That the disfigurement that results from this disease is credited with the husband's alienation of affection from his wife suggests the way that the adopted child may be seen as poisoning the family and its patterns of affection.

[21] See *He Knew She Was Right: The Independent Woman in the Novels of Anthony Trollope* (Carbondale and Edwardsville: Southern Illinois Univ. Press, 1989).

pact with the mother whom his brother had duped (Thorne urges her to emigrate with her loyal working-class suitor, promising her "If you will go with this man I will be father . . and mother to [your baby]" [p 27]), his adoption is contingent upon the exile of the mother, who, like her daughter, is in a sense reborn at this juncture through Thorne's offices, marrying and starting a new family in America Because of Thorne's intervention Mary never meets her discredited mother. "Recruited" for the Thorne side of the family—and, ultimately, for the Greshams—Mary becomes the vehicle for the restoration of the estate in both a literal way, through her property, and in a figurative way, through her qualities [22]

That an adopted child should be the key to the preservation of Greshamsbury recalls Austen's *Mansfield Park* Duckworth introduced the term "the improvement of the estate" in a study of Austen's oeuvre in which *Mansfield Park* serves as the paradigmatic novel It is not coincidental that Austen's novel features a heroine who, like Mary Thorne, is informally adopted by a relative who is financially and socially better placed than her immediate family Duckworth writes of Austen's Fanny "That the initially deracinated individual, the adopted daughter of the house, should be the true trustee of its traditions is the instructive irony of the novel, an irony whose meaning requires careful interpretation" (p 72) [23] The same irony informs *Doctor Thorne*, for Mary, more than any of its members, embodies the values that Greshamsbury should seek to uphold (she is

[22] Kincaid's term "recruitment" is apt, for the novel displays a number of attempts to recruit individuals The De Courcys recruit the elder Gresham as a son-in-law and in so doing hope to recruit him for the Whig party, a generation later, the De Courcy women attempt to recruit the younger Frank for the maternal side of his family Miss Dunstable is recruited by the Barsetshire set for wealth I am suggesting that the adoption of Mary, because it involves claiming her for the group whose interests the novel champions, can be seen as another instance of recruitment Recruitment in the adoption plot is also visible in *Daniel Deronda*, where the protagonist must turn away from his adopted world when he is recruited to serve in the Zionist project associated with his natal heritage

[23] The trajectory followed by the two adopted heroines is also similar Duckworth notes Fanny's odyssey from periphery to center of Mansfield Park, followed by an expulsion after she refuses the offer from Crawford, and finally a return to the center Like Fanny, Mary is allowed to exist on the margin of the Greshamsbury family circle but is banished from it when Frank's declaration of love for her lands her in disgrace, only to be ultimately let back in, this time to the very center

far better suited to be mistress of the estate than the querulous Lady Arabella), and her inheritance becomes crucial to the preservation of Greshamsbury only because the elder Gresham has been guilty of a failure of stewardship that has led to a literal loss of control over much of the estate. Duckworth argues that Fanny's adopted status is meant to suggest that personal commitment must animate inherited forms; the displacement of Julia and Maria, daughters by birth, by Fanny, daughter by adoption, suggests "the imperative need for the social order to be informed by individual worth" (Duckworth, p. 79). Trollope, who shares with Austen an interest in the negotiation between tradition and individualism, figures that dilemma through Mary, whose adoption gives her an ambiguous class status. Illegitimate but raised a gentlewoman, with distinguished blood in her veins but the corresponding name hers only by sufferance, Mary is led to ponder the extent to which good birth should qualify and low birth should disqualify the individual:

> Was it not within her capacity to do as nobly, to love as truly, to worship her God in heaven with as perfect a faith, and her god on earth with as leal a troth, as though blood had descended to her purely through scores of purely born progenitors? So to herself she spoke, and yet, as she said it, she knew that were she a man, such a man as the heir of Greshamsbury should be, nothing should tempt her to sully her children's blood by mating herself with any one that was base born. (p. 107)

Mary is led to these contradictory reflections in part by her surprise that Augusta Gresham consents to marry the son of a wealthy tailor. But the instructive subplot concerning Augusta Gresham, who is willing to marry a man she does not love or respect (or indeed even know) as a sacrifice to what she perceives as the family's needs, reveals the erasure of the individual that can occur when there is too great an identification with family name. The adoptive family identity, in contrast to a hereditary one, is to a greater extent an "earned" identity, and one where personal choice and personal commitment are given greater prominence. The adoptive relation of Mary and the doctor is itself a model of this ratification through individual commit-

ment. When Mary takes up permanent residence in the doctor's house at age twelve, the narrator comments:

> It must not be supposed that [Thorne] had lost sight of his charge during her earlier years. He was much too well aware of the nature of the promise which he had made to the departing mother to do that. He had constantly visited his little niece, and long before the first twelve years of her life were over had lost all consciousness of his promise, and of his duty to the mother, in the stronger ties of downright personal love for the only creature that belonged to him. (p. 44)

If Trollope's and Austen's adoption plots have in common a concern with individual merit, they are divided by an important difference as well. In marked contrast to Fanny, aspects of Mary's natal background play an important role in the social function she is to fulfill. From her working-class mother, "a model of female beauty of the strong and robuster cast, and [with] a better reputation as being a girl of good character and honest, womanly conduct" (p. 21), Mary inherits the vitality badly needed in the static Gresham/De Courcy household: "sober and demure as was her usual settled appearance, she could talk, when the fit came on her, with an energy which in truth surprised those who did not know her. . . . Energy! nay, it was occasionally a concentration of passion" (p. 46). From her mother's brother, of course, she inherits a fortune that includes all the outstanding claims on Greshamsbury. Kincaid notes of *Doctor Thorne*:

> The informing myth is one of blood restoration, almost blood-sucking. . . . The Greshams are preserved by the energy (and money) they absorb from the lower class. The message is finally clear—and grim—enough.
>
> That the novel seems far warmer and less disturbed than all this suggests is due to the wonderful rhetorical control Trollope establishes over us and never loses for more than a moment throughout. He disguises the violence of the primitive myth of blood transfusion and reintegration . . . by a variety of means, among which are a style more than ordinarily relaxed and a narrator of supreme serenity. (pp. 114–15)

It is not only the narration that proceeds at a leisurely pace but the process of adoption itself, which allows for gradual assimilation. Thanks to her adoption Mary becomes so thoroughly one of those whose interests she will be made to serve that the idea of appropriation is suppressed. Thus Mary's adoption, which participates in that process of blood restoration, itself serves to mask the latent violence inherent in that process. Mary's rescue of the Greshams is presented as an extension of her rescue by Doctor Thorne; given the alliance between Gresham and Thorne, this suggests a structure of reciprocity. Moreover, Trollope ingenuously presents Mary's heirship as a solution not only for the Greshams but for the Scatcherds as well. Scatcherd speaks to Thorne of his and his wife's inability to be happy after their dramatic change in fortune; by nature and by experience they are not equipped to play the roles that their new fortune suddenly assigns them.[24] The next generation of their own family is no more capable than they of living up to the new position. Louis Philippe is even less qualified than his father; he lacks his father's drive, which he had no impetus to develop, but could not hope to acquire from his father a compensating gain in refinement. Thanks to her adoption by Thorne (and thanks perhaps to her Thorne blood as well), Mary, unlike Scatcherd's own child, is a suitable heir; when Scatcherd discovers that the doctor's niece is also his own niece, he delights in the thought of her probable accomplishments and writes her into his will forthwith.

In the case of the Scatcherds, property transmission does not follow the line of direct descent, because of a failure in the genetic project; their son, Louis Philippe, is a sickly, dissolute, and spineless youth, "strong neither in mind nor body" (p. 142), "a poor, puny creature, without physical strength . . . [and] killing himself with alcohol" (p. 147). His father has passed on to him his alcoholism but not the strong constitution that in his own case ensured survival.[25] The successful adoption of Mary

[24] Kincaid sees in the depiction of the Scatcherds' unhappiness an advocacy of gradual social mobility. This prescription can be filled by the adoption of a child into a family of a higher social class.

[25] Kincaid notes a similarity between Linton Heathcliff and Louis Philippe Scatcherd as scapegoats who "drain off the bad blood" (p. 120).

contrasts with the genetic failures the novel displays While many of Louis Phillipe's problems stem from the anomalies of his parents' situation, the genetic project of the upper classes is not entirely successful either As background to the story the narrator recounts the rapid and uneconomical accumulation of ten children in the Gresham family (all daughters save one), a process that contributes to the financial woes of Gresham Moreover, a number of the daughters are sickly and die while still children, so that of the last birth the narrator says: "Then came the youngest of the flock, she whose birth . . was not heralded with loud joy, for when she came into the world, four others, with pale temples, wan, worn cheeks, and skeleton, white arms, were awaiting permission to leave it" (p 8) The affective links between the generations are under strain as well The unfortunate Louis Phillipe is again an extreme case in point. he becomes an object of distaste to his father and of fear for his mother, who actually prefers Frank Gresham, her former nursling, to her own child and who tries to convince her husband to make Frank an heir. (It is interesting that this situation stems from the fact that the doomed Scatcherd progeny, in an unsettlingly literal application of Kincaid's metaphor, "had been dismissed from his mother's breast in order that the mother's milk might nourish the young heir of Greshamsbury" [*Doctor Thorne*, p 142]) The elder Scatcherd acknowledges, "what could he do for his boy except die?" (p 327) This question echoes a note sounded at the other end of the social scale in the aristocratic De Courcy family, where the dictates of self-interest prevail, the sons speak of losing a father as a stroke of good fortune, since it enables a man to come into his inheritance While both Frank Greshams, father and son, are genuinely fond of each other, the Gresham household is rendered unhappy by the factionalism that characterizes it In fact, the only successful family the novel shows is the adoptive one constituted by Doctor Thorne and Mary

The "single-parent household" of Doctor and Mary Thorne avoids the factionalism that characterizes the Gresham family Because Thorne virtually suppresses one-half of Mary's genetic equation by segregating her from her maternal inheritance as

she is raised, he avoids the conflict of values that can inform a household combining two family lines. At the beginning of *Doctor Thorne* the history of the union between the Tory Francis Gresham and the Whig Lady Arabella De Courcy illustrates the difficulty of integrating contrasting bloodlines and contrasting family traditions through marriage. Divided by politics and by priorities (she wants to refurnish the London house, he wants to bring the county hounds to Greshamsbury), their incompatibility seems irresolvable.[26] There is no affection between them, and the failures of their marriage have a direct impact on the events leading to the mortgaging of the estate. So antithetical are the two lines of Gresham and De Courcy that their children must be either one or the other and must serve either one or the other interest. While "young Frank was every inch a Gresham, and was the darling of his father's heart[,] ... the Misses Gresham were made in the De Courcy mould, and were not on this account the less dear to their mother" (p. 8). In the doctor's household there is no such factionalism; Mary is so thoroughly a daughter of her single parent/uncle that there is a complete unanimity of interests. The novel's emphasis on the factionalism produced by a marriage of opposites suggests that adoption is a better method of blood restoration than marriage, since it allows for a more gradual—and hence more successful—process of integration. It is adoption rather than marriage that in this novel becomes the key to a greater social cohesiveness.

If *Doctor Thorne* follows the example of *Mansfield Park* in yoking a female adoption plot to an improve-

[26] Frank and Mary will be more compatible spouses than his parents in part because they have been raised largely together and thus have shared values. Like Fanny Price, who is educated with the Bertram sisters at Mansfield Park, Mary takes her lessons with the Gresham daughters, to the extent that the squire "accustom[s] himself to look at Mary Thorne running about the house with his own children as though she were one of the same brood" (p. 104). Thus another advantage secured by her adoption is an almost sanguinal affinity with her future husband.

ment of the estate theme, a later novel that flirts with the same possibility but ultimately rejects it is George Eliot's *Felix Holt*.[27] The initial histories of Mary Thorne and of Esther Lyon have a number of features in common: both are adoptees of mixed lineage who are informed of their true origins as they reach the marriageable age, and both are revealed to be the unexpected heirs to large estates. Just as Mary does, Esther becomes the vehicle for restoring that estate to longtime owners she might have dispossessed. As an attractive, single young woman who can be courted by Harold Transome, Esther is initially viewed by Harold and his mother as a tool through whom they can literally save Transome Court. Ultimately, however, they see her as the potential savior of their home in a deeper sense, perceiving qualities in her that could restore hope and happiness to their household were she to join it. This possibility is rejected, however, as Esther allies herself instead with an associate of her adoptive father whose goal is to help bring the working class to man's estate. The adoption plots of Trollope and George Eliot work in opposite directions: rather than the adopted woman serving as the estate's redeemer, the adoption in *Felix Holt* redeems the woman by allowing her to escape the corrupting influence of the estate.

The different ends that adoption serves in *Doctor Thorne* and *Felix Holt* are linked to the respective treatments of the heroines' identities in the novels. In each case the adoptive milieu dramatically differs from that associated with the daughter's natal origin, creating the potential for alternative identities. Mary's mother is working class and sexually fallen, while Esther's French mother is suspect on racial grounds. Thus both Mary and Esther must dis-identify with the maternal heritage in order to qualify themselves as proper English wives and mothers. This is an easier process for Mary than it is for Esther. There is never any threat of Mary repeating her mother's fall, the class identification her affiliation with Thorne secures her is apparently proof against any such eventuality. By contrast, Esther Lyon is in danger of reproducing her mother's features,

[27] George Eliot, *Felix Holt, the Radical*, ed. Fred C. Thomson (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1980).

her finicky taste and her sentimental weakness for authors like Byron—characteristics associated with her French mother and her aristocratic father—are tendencies that flourish even in a dissenting preacher's household Throughout the novel Esther appears to everyone who encounters her to be an anomaly in what turns out to be an adoptive household In contrast to Mary Thorne, Esther (like George Eliot's other adopted heroine, Eppi Marner) must actively choose between her adoptive class and her natal class (Eppi must choose directly between her two fathers, Esther must choose between two suitors, Harold Transome and Felix Holt, who are linked, respectively, to her natal and adoptive fathers) While Mary Thorne will inevitably belong to the upper class, George Eliot has both of her adopted heroines choose to align themselves with a respectable working class

The importance of the adoptive, freely chosen identity in *Felix Holt* is linked to the concern in that novel with the oppressiveness of the past—whether it is the individual's past, as in the case of Mrs Transome, or the family's past, as in the case of her son A number of the characters are engaged in projects that involve the rejection of inherited traditions Felix refuses to continue the family business, Harold Transome leaves what has historically been his family's and his class's political party in order to stand as a Radical, the dissenting sect of Reverend Lyon eschews the inherited form of worship in favor of a religion that emphasizes individual selection Esther's choice of her adoptive class over her natal class might be viewed in the same light, especially as this choice leads her to join Felix in a way of life whose goal is to contribute to a process of social evolution The connection of the adoption plot to this project is suggested by the implicit metaphor in Felix's description of his philosophy "It is held reasonable enough to toil for the fortunes of a family, though it may turn to imbecility in the third generation I choose a family with more chances in it" (p 225)

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Ruskin's Theoretic Practicality and the Royal Academy's Aesthetic Idealism

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In the preface to his masterly *The Last Romantics* (1949) Graham Hough explains that he had traced the influences on Yeats back until he came to Ruskin. "The new ideas about the arts and their relations to religion and the social order all seemed to originate somewhere in the dense jungle of Ruskin's works." Raymond Williams questions this assessment, finding Ruskin's works less a jungle than is the history of reactions to and commentary on his writings.[1] Indeed, it is difficult for anyone entering on either the great Cook and Wedderburn edition of Ruskin or the immense secondary literature not to see both as tangled vastnesses. But there is a third jungle closely interrelated with the others and quite as difficult to encompass: the world of English art surrounding Ruskin in the nineteenth century. To step back and try to survey the burgeoning realm of British art, especially painting, in the nineteenth century is to enter territory as tangled and extensive as the thirty-nine volumes of Ruskin's works.

The current resurgence of concern for the context against which we regard a text or an author has followed hard upon the influential doctrine that contexts are boundless. We have

[1] Hough, *The Last Romantics* (London: Gerald Duckworth, 1947), p. vii, and Williams, *Culture and Society, 1780–1950* (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1958), pp. 133–34.

become quite properly cautious of thinking of *the* context of anything, however, what one *can* do is pick out and trace apparently important intellectual and social conditions that contribute to the total context. Much recent writing on Ruskin having emphasized the biographical context, the present essay is intended as a reminder of the relations of the volumes at the center of Ruskin's influence—*Modern Painters, The Seven Lamps of Architecture*, and *The Stones of Venice*—to the "official" art world as represented by the Royal Academy. Curiously enough, in this context the enormous influence achieved by Ruskin's earlier works can be understood as partially attributable to two qualities little associated with Ruskin today strategic reasonableness and practicality.

Although Ruskin contributed much to the Victorian discourse on art and architecture, that discourse was already strongly underway by the time he published his first volume in 1843 By the middle of the nineteenth century, British art had developed from an undeniable nadir at the time of the founding of the Royal Academy in 1768 to what not only the British art world but also connoisseurs on the Continent regarded as the most vital center of European art. The panegyric in the first issue of the *Art-Union* would not have been regarded as excessive when it was published in 1839, four years before the publication of the first volume of *Modern Painters*

> Our estimate of British Art is, indeed, high, too high, perhaps, for those who over-rate ancient productions, and value a picture, as they do wine, in proportion to its age We take it to be indisputable that the Artists of Great Britain greatly surpass the existing Artists of any other nation, and if, in some respects, they fall short of the power for which the Old Masters are so renowned, at least they paint more to the heart, and with greater certainty excite those sympathies, to produce and foster which is the noblest privilege of Art [2]

[2] "Introduction," *The Art Union*, 1 (1839), 1

Current critical opinion is inclined to agree about the place of the nineteenth century in the history of English art. Jeremy Maas's assessment is that the Victorian period was "a great age for English painting. If the period produced few artists of world stature, this was balanced by the cumulative effect of the rich diversity of high talent, occasionally bordering on greatness. If the parts are sometimes leaden, the whole is a bright golden glow." Christopher Wood similarly describes the Victorian period as "the golden age of English art."[3]

Despite the appalling numbers of the wretchedly poor, the soot-blackened ugliness of the industrial cities, and what seem to us the vulgar fashions of the growing middle class, the pursuit of the beautiful, or at least the pleasant and attractive, and correspondingly the ambition to raise the taste of the English public ran strongly through the entire century. One can argue about the extent to which aesthetic taste was elevated and about the degree to which any improvement in taste can be expected to refine other aspects of a total culture, but there is no doubt that British painting improved, that the number of artists markedly increased, that the purchases of contemporary British painting grew immensely, and that the brisk production and distribution of engraved reproductions reflected a heightened consciousness of the visual arts. Moreover, the first public art gallery in England, the Dulwich, opened only five years before Ruskin's birth, and the National Gallery six years after. During the early years of Ruskin's life the Royal Academy exhibition had ceased to be so largely the resort of the fashionable, and the demand for additional exhibition venues had resulted in the founding of the Society of British Artists and the New Society of Painters in Water-Colours (the British Institution and the "Old" Water-Colour Society, dating from 1805, were already well established).

Ruskin was thus able to take a kind of renaissance in painting for granted. The first sentence of the first chapter of the first volume of *Modern Painters* begins: "If it be true, and it can scarcely be disputed, that nothing has been for centuries consecrated by public admiration, without possessing in a high de-

[3] Maas, *Victorian Painters* (London: Barnes and Noble, 1969), p. 10, and Wood, *Victorian Painters*, 2 vols. (Woodbridge, Suffolk: Antique Collectors' Club, 1995), II, 10.

gree some kind of sterling excellence . . ."[4] The fact is that public admiration of painting in any real sense had only come into existence in the early decades of the century, but appreciation of the achievement of English artists was rapidly increasing by the 1830s. Not only was the interest in art already greatly expanded from what it had been at the time of the founding of the Royal Academy, but many of the opinions and beliefs developed in the series of major treatises that came to completion with the fifth volume of *Modern Painters* (1860) and that are now strongly associated with Ruskin were already current. Although in the mid 1830s *Blackwood's* could be savage in its comments on Turner,[5] by that time (six years before the first volume of *Modern Painters* appeared in 1843) no one doubted his preeminence. Turner had become a full member of the Royal Academy in 1802 at the age of twenty-seven, and the esteem in which he was held by the Academicians was undiminished.[6] It is well known that the Gothic that Ruskin so strongly defended had able champions before he began to write, and that its status had been much reinforced by the decision made in the mid 1830s to rebuild the Houses of Parliament in the Gothic style. As for the role of the worker in an increasingly industrial society, complaints about the divorce between the creative designer and the worker who was to apply the design were voiced as early as the 1836 Select Committee on Design, and condemnation of the uniform ugliness of machine manufacture was

[4] *The Works of John Ruskin*, ed. E. T. Cook and Alexander Wedderburn, 39 vols. (London: George Allen, 1903–12), III, 79. This edition is parenthetically cited for all quotations from Ruskin.

[5] "We look upon his pictures in the present exhibition as a bold attempt to insult the public taste. . . . White brimstone and stone-blue are daubed about in dreadful and dreamy disorder. The execution is as if done with the finger and the nail, as if he had taken a pet against brushes. His figures are scratched and scrambled in with less resemblance to human limbs than they usually pretend to." ("Exhibitions—The Royal Academy," *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, 42 [1837], 335–36).

[6] One interesting bit of evidence for this esteem is afforded by the discussion of the special privilege granted to members of the Royal Academy of touching up their paintings on the "varnishing days" prior to the opening of the Academy's summer exhibition. William Sandby cites as the major reason for the continuation of a practice recognized as giving an unfair advantage to Royal Academy members over other exhibitors that Turner used this opportunity to make major improvements in the paintings he was exhibiting (see Sandby, *The History of the Royal Academy of Arts: From Its Foundation in 1768 to the Present Time*, 2 vols. [London: Longman, Green, Longman, Roberts, and Green, 1862], I, 275, and II, 239–40).

expressed by the jury of the Fine Arts section of the Great Exhibition of 1851, the year the first volume of *Stones of Venice* appeared. Ruskin's belief (later recanted) that impious men cannot be great painters (*Works*, IV, 211) had been influentially expressed long before he urged it. The identification of the artist's morality with the wholesomeness of the resulting work appears, for instance, in Benjamin West's comment in his *Discourse Delivered to the Students of the Royal Academy* in 1792.

> Virtue, always indispensable, is of the first consequence in the life of the elegant artist, whose contemplations are, or should be, always sedate, and whose mind should always be tranquil and at home. But this is impossible on the supposition that his life is not the regular life of virtue.[7]

But although much of what Ruskin had to say was already being urged and debated by the time he began to publish, setting aside Joshua Reynolds's *Discourses* and the published lectures of the professors of the Royal Academy (to which I will return), there had been almost no discussion of the principles of painting.[8] The time was ripe for Ruskin's entry, and what gave additional freshness to his writing was not only the power of his prose style but the practical reasonableness of his arguments. The more biographers have focused on Ruskin's personal life, the less applicable the words "reasonable" and "practical" may seem to be. However, these qualities become evident when one approaches Ruskin's writings from the direction of the Royal Academy.[9]

The major positions laid out by Joshua Reynolds in his *Discourses* (1769–92) continued to represent

[7] *A Discourse Delivered to the Students of the Royal Academy . . . December 10, 1792 . . . to which is prefaced The Speech of the President to the Royal Academicians on the 24th of March 1792* (London: T. Cadell, 1793), p. 9.

[8] The major exceptions are found in the writings of Benjamin Haydon and James Barry, both of whom stirred up considerable controversy among Royal Academicians and patrons of the arts while reaching few in the general public.

[9] Linda M. Austin's *The Practical Ruskin: Economics and Audience in the Late Work* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1991) is essentially an account of the efforts of the later Ruskin (of the 1870s and 1880s) both to take account of a version of the economic doctrine of marginal utility and to adapt his writings to his conception of his audience. Her interests are thus minimally related to mine.

Academy orthodoxy almost to the end of the nineteenth century, for instance, little variation from the dicta of the Academy's first president is to be found in the lectures given by the successive Royal Academy professors of painting for a hundred years following his death. Everyone knows of Reynolds's praise of historical painting and the grand style and his insistence on the subordination of the individual and particular to the general, but only those who have read the total set of discourses know how constantly he returns to these views—or how quickly his comments descend into vagueness. One of his best-known formulations is that "the whole beauty and grandeur of the Art consists, in my opinion, in being able to get above all singular forms, local customs, particularities, and details of every kind."[10] Where Plato had seen the artist as producing a copy of a copy of the ideal, Reynolds's transmogrification of Platonism assumes that the true artist's power lies in the ability to imagine and represent the ideal itself.

Reynolds believed that such ideal forms fit well with an idealized conception of the subject; and that subject, if the painting is to belong to the highest realms of art, should be a dramatic scene drawn from history, the Bible, or religious legend. In short, it should be "historical painting," as that term was understood at the time. Truth to nature for Reynolds becomes transcendence of the material world, transcendence of the appearance of objects and the mundane facts of history rather than imitation of them. "So far therefore is servile imitation from being necessary, that whatever is familiar, or in any way reminds us of what we see and hear every day, perhaps does not belong to the higher provinces of art, either in poetry or painting" (*Discourses*, p. 358 [13th Discourse]). Moreover, whatever history or the Bible tells us of the appearance of heroes or apostles, these subjects should never appear other than noble in painting. The painter "cannot make his hero talk like a great man, he must make him look like one" (p. 76 [4th Discourse]).[11]

[10] Joshua Reynolds, *Discourses Delivered to the Students of the Royal Academy*, ed. Roger Fry (London: Seeley and Co., 1905), p. 53 (3d Discourse). All citations of Reynolds are to this edition.

[11] That Reynolds's high praise of historical painting and of the grand style he believed necessary for historical painting did not accord with his own practice was recog-

The weaknesses in Reynolds are not difficult to spot. Some of the most cogent were noted by William Hazlitt in his essay on the Fine Arts for the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (1816) and his essay "On Certain Inconsistencies in Sir Joshua Reynolds's Discourses" (1821).[12] In these essays Hazlitt denies that Raphael practiced the kind of generalization that Reynolds attributed to him, argues that the ideal is not to be produced by leaving out details, and defends the Dutch genre-painting of Ruysdael and Teniers that was so obviously counter to all the tenets of the grand style. In addition, it was increasingly obvious that the historical painting championed by Reynolds was only rarely being attempted in England and was so seldom successful that the wise painter would avoid the attempt.

But despite occasional explicit recognition of the defects of Reynolds's views, the professors of painting in the Royal Academy went on repeating virtually the same formulas. James Barry, the second Academy professor of painting (serving from 1784 to 1798), assures his auditors that imitations "intended to display beauty, sublimity, and wisdom" are found only "in *abstract or general nature*."[13] For beauty resides in the most perfect correspondence with our *idea* of each species (p. 104). Or again, the "ideal of design has for its object *general* and *perfect*, and not individual, imperfect nature" (p. 118). John Opie, who served as professor of painting from 1805 to 1807, explained that the highest class of art is that in which the artists "have made the imitation of real objects give way to the imitation of an idea of them in their utmost perfection," representing them "not as they actually are, but as they ought to be" (*Lectures on Painting*, pp. 243–44). The historical painter should show "how it *might* and *should* have happened" (p. 280). Thomas Phillips, who served as the Academy's professor of art from 1825 to 1832, repeated the standard doctrine in another form: "that infinite variety of features and of expression which we behold among

nized even by the early-nineteenth-century academicians, but that in itself did not constitute a rebuttal of his theories.

[12] See William Hazlitt, *Criticisms on Art: and Sketches of the Picture Galleries of England*, 1st and 2d Series (London: C. Templeman, 1843, 1844).

[13] *Lectures on Painting by the Royal Academicians: Barry, Opie, and Fuseli*, ed. Ralph N. Wornum (London: Henry G. Bohn, 1848), p. 93. Cited as *Lectures on Painting* hereafter.

mankind, has its source in a departure from the purity of primitive, or generic and essential form: strictly speaking, there can be but two specific forms of the human figure perfectly beautiful, as male and female."[14]

Year after year the professors' lectures were filled with admirable sentiments and praise of the great historical painters (Raphael and Michelangelo of course at the head of the list), but they contained so little investigation of the source of art's presumed value for the culture, of the reasons for human responses to painting, or even of the specific problems faced by the painter, that to read through the published lectures becomes a mind-numbing experience.[15] Much of what seems the vacuity of so many of these lectures must be attributed to loyalty to the grand style of historical painting. W. S. Sparrow, one of the historians of the Royal Academy, noted: "There is pathos in the Academy's persevering and fruitless efforts to establish in England a generative set of traditions in these great branches of art," that is, in the elder tradition of classic and historical painting. Sparrow continues: "It is in the various forms of genre that the Royal Academicians have produced such things in figure-painting as are vital, various, and full of the impulses and eccentricities of the English character."[16]

Although Reynolds and the Royal Academy professors had no doubt of the high purposes of art, nor that

[14] Thomas Phillips, *Lectures on the History and Principles of Painting* (London: Longmans, 1833), p. 264.

[15] At the end of the eighteenth century James Barry all too frequently produces such fogginess as "the composition should appear the true efflux of a mind so heated and full of the subject as to lose all regard and attention to every thing foreign" (*Lectures on Painting*, p. 153). At the end of the nineteenth century George Clausen allows himself such circularities as "a work may be true to nature although it does not aim at illusion or full representation: it fulfills its purpose if it communicates truly, within its limits, that aspect of nature which it chooses" (*Royal Academy Lectures on Painting: Sixteen Lectures Delivered to the Students of the Royal Academy of Arts* [London: Methuen, 1913], p. 328).

[16] W. S. Sparrow, "Painters of the Royal Academy, 1768–1868," in *The Royal Academy from Reynolds to Millais*, ed. Charles Holme (London: The Studio, 1904), (P) ix–xi ("P" here denotes the letter assigned the essay in the discontinuous pagination of the volume).

those purposes were most fully achieved through paintings in the grand style, they never adequately grounded their principles. That is, they offer no direct answer to the question "Of what value is *any* painting to the individual viewer or society in general?" Or, phrased differently, "Granted that some, or many, people find pleasure in looking at products of the painter's art, what justification is there for giving serious attention to that art?" In answering that question Ruskin did for art what Matthew Arnold was not to do for literature until twenty years later. While Arnold's enormously influential "The Function of Criticism at the Present Time" (1864) provided an explanation of the purpose of criticism, and by extension literature, the formula "the best known and thought" scarcely extended to the visual arts. There was no need for it to do so. Ruskin had long since authoritatively announced the function and justification for painting.

If art had a function beyond the perpetuation of the likenesses of the titled and the wealthy, and the ostentatious decoration of their homes, what was it? While in the beginning Ruskin's answer was not wholly direct, no one who began reading *Modern Painters* could miss its general direction, a direction easily assimilated because it was congruent with the orthodox religious view of the creation. Simply stated, the beauty of nature, including that of the human form, was the expression of God's goodness; the artist who represented that beauty offered a reminder of God's beneficence and power, a reminder that challenged viewers to prove themselves worthy of such a God. Ruskin's well-known summary in the preface to the fifth volume of *Modern Painters* is succinct:

> In the main aim and principle of the book, there is no variation, from its first syllable to its last. It declares the perfectness and eternal beauty of the work of God, and tests all work of man by concurrence with, or subjection to that. (*Works*, VII, 9)

Thus formulated, the argument seems all too simple, but in its simplicity lay its power. It was endowed with a dual practicality in that it could encompass the kind of art that appealed to the rising new class of purchasers who sought neither the heroic nor the sternly biblical, and it was strategically effective in that

it appealed to a moral and ultimately a conveniently general religious sanction. Given the publicly accepted beliefs of his time, the principle that the accurate depiction of the world paid homage to its creator could be taken as an immediate, not merely theoretical, justification for creating and loving art. Moreover, it gave Ruskin license to write about whatever details of a picture he chose without constantly seeking to make explicit moral correlations. That which pleases sight is an occasion for enjoyment but also for thankfulness, and thus it has its moral influence. "Now the mere animal consciousness of the pleasantness I call Æsthesis; but the exulting, reverent, and grateful perception of it I call Theoria" (*Works*, IV, 47).

> as it is necessary to the existence of an idea of beauty, that the sensual pleasure which may be its basis should be accompanied first with joy, then with love of the object, then with the perception of kindness in a superior intelligence, finally, with thankfulness and veneration towards that intelligence itself ... it is evident that the sensation of beauty is not sensual on the one hand, nor is it intellectual on the other, but is dependent on a pure, right, and open state of the heart. (*Works*, IV, 48–49)

At the same time, whether by intent or not, Ruskin's guiding principle had a strategic efficacy in that it allowed for the modification rather than the denial of a number of Reynolds's key doctrines. In terms of the moral value of art Ruskin did nothing to undercut the kind of latent platonism that appears in Reynolds's assumption that the beautiful is somehow both good in itself and productive of the good. But Reynolds had assumed the moral value without troubling to argue for it. Perhaps the closest that he comes to assigning a reason for giving art a high place in society is in a passage from his ninth Discourse:

> it is, therefore, necessary to the happiness of individuals, and still more necessary to the security of society, that the mind should be elevated to the idea of general beauty, and the contemplation of general truth, by this pursuit the mind is always carried forward in search of something more excellent than it finds, and obtains its proper superiority over the common senses of life, by learning to feel itself capable of higher aims and nobler enjoyments. In this gradual exaltation of human nature, every art contributes its

> contingent towards the general supply of mental pleasure What-ever abstracts the thoughts from sensual gratifications, whatever teaches us to look for happiness within ourselves, must advance in some measure the dignity of our nature (pp 262–63)

While anyone knowing Plato could fill out an argument of this sort, as presented by the Academicians it remains abstract and vague What Ruskin expressed was a most direct yet unthreatening way of giving greater substance to the formula that great art is in some way allied to the worship of God.

Ruskin's central formula was appealing partly because, while founded on religious belief, it did not demand religious art, and while insisting on moral judgments, it did not encourage directly didactic art Moreover, Ruskin was not so much challenging the Royal Academy's principles as bending them to his own uses Thus he was quite in agreement with the orthodox view that the production of great painting was an index of the refinement at which a society had arrived Reynolds had written "It is indeed difficult to give any other reason, why an empire like that of Britain should so long have wanted an ornament so suitable to its greatness [as the Academy], than that slow progression of things, which naturally makes elegance and refinement the last effect of opulence and power" (p 5 [1st Discourse]) Ruskin makes his own peculiar use of this viewpoint in seeing the greatness of Venetian painting (and of later Gothic architecture) as a reflection of the society that produced it Although he increasingly speaks of the power of the beautiful on the beholder (particularly in architecture), his emphasis is on art as an index to the moral health of the society

Ruskin's modification of Reynolds's concept of the grand style is of particular interest. The first chapter of the third volume of *Modern Painters* (1856), "Of the Received Opinion Touching the 'Grand Style'"—a commentary on Reynolds's statement of the principles of that style in numbers 79 and 82 of the *Idler* (which are in essence congruent with the principles repeated in the *Discourses*)—in no way denies that there is a grand, or "great," style, rather Ruskin's point is that the avoidance of detail and of "the common" are not its necessary hallmarks The noble subject prescribed by Reynolds remains one

of the criteria of the "Greatness of Style" described in chapter 3 of that volume, along with a love of beauty, sincerity, and imaginative power.

Similarly, Ruskin's defense of Turner's later paintings was not in essence the repudiation of the grand style but the substitution of a dramatically rendered representation of the effect of a particular scene for the ideal one. Though Ruskin avoided the specific Reynoldsian wording, in effect he was asserting that Turner achieves the grand style while remaining closer to the truth of nature than the idealizing painters. Moreover, Ruskin's attack on Whistler need not be attributed solely to habitual quirkiness or his growing mental instability: while Turner's subjects, however loosely handled, are such as can be argued to belong to the grand style, Whistler's subjects, whether one has in mind paintings like "The Falling Rocket" (*Nocturne in Black and Gold*), "Cremorne Lights" (*Nocturne in Blue and Silver*) or "Chelsea, Snow" (*Nocturne in Grey and Gold*), can hardly be claimed for it. Similarly, the importance of the delineation of the natural world explains Ruskin's sympathy with what would otherwise seem incompatible: the bold, broad, atmospheric painting of Turner and the detailed representation of the Pre-Raphaelites. Although Ruskin warned against the dangers of excessive literalness, an emphasis on the natural world was too central for the great apologist of Turner to fault the very different painters who nevertheless evidenced devotion to it.

Readers of *Modern Painters* cannot but notice that few modern painters besides Turner receive significant notice anywhere in the five volumes. (In fact, Ruskin's originally intended title had been simply "Turner and the Ancients.") Almost all of Ruskin's comments on contemporary English painters are concentrated in some forty pages of the seventh chapter of the second section of the first part of the third edition of Volume I, "General Application of the Foregoing Principles," and the ten pages of the 1848 Addenda to Volume II.[17] But Ruskin was nevertheless more current than the professors of the Royal Academy. The original charge to these professors had been to give lectures "calculated to instruct the Students in the principles of

[17] That is, volumes III and IV of Ruskin's *Works*.

composition, to form their taste of design and colouring, to strengthen their judgment, to point out to them the beauties and imperfections of celebrated works of Art, and the particular excellencies or defects of great masters, and, finally, to lead them into the readiest and most efficacious paths of study."[18] In their published lectures the professors rarely go beyond this charge. In contrast, Ruskin spoke directly to the actual characteristics of contemporary painting, and contemporary English painting in particular, through his devotion to and championship of landscape painting.[19] Of course, in the very intention to champion a painter primarily known for his landscapes Ruskin was undercutting the central tenet of the Academy that the most worthy art was that which depicted historical (including of course biblical) subjects. The dedication of the first volume of *Modern Painters* was "To the Landscape Artists of England." Perhaps only in retrospect does a reader recognize how little Ruskin wrote about the depiction of the human figure and how very much more about natural objects than any of the Royal Academy lecturers. Ruskin's belief that nature was the handiwork and revelation of God made it possible to regard the painting of landscape as an implicit act of worship; while this point of view was hardly revolutionary, it was not one that had been urged in the Academy.

It is not only in praising landscape painting and putting the ethical value of art on grounds more readily graspable that Ruskin was in fact more practical—that is, more in tune with the time—than the official teaching of the Royal Academy. When one turns to Ruskin's comments on individual paintings in contemporary exhibitions, the freedom given him by his identification of the painting of nature with praise of its creator is apparent. With Ruskin's strong moral interests in mind, one would expect frequent explicitly moral judgments, but in fact his published "Notes" on the Royal Academy exhibitions (he

[18] Article XII of "The Instrument (of Foundation)," in J. E. Hodgson and Fred A. Eaton, *The Royal Academy and Its Members, 1768–1830* (London: John Murray, 1905), p. 348.

[19] Only in the praise of the early religious painters in Volume II of *Modern Painters* (vol. IV of the *Works*) does Ruskin move significantly away from his concentration on landscape.

provided the public with "Notes" on the exhibitions of 1855 to 1859 and that of 1875)[20] treat primarily matters of execution, of the accuracy of the painting even of wholly imaginary scenes. Ruskin points to details that the ordinary viewer is invited to judge.

The following examples from the "Notes" on the Royal Academy Exhibition of 1855 can be taken as typical. The first paintings upon which Ruskin comments, Annie Mutrie's flower paintings, are praised simply for "lovely, pure, and yet unobtrusive colour" and "richness of petal texture" (*Works*, XIV, 7). In Daniel Maclise's *The Wrestling in "As You Like It"* the faults are that Charles the wrestler looks more like a monster than the evidence in the play warrants, the seven circular ornaments on the hem of the Duke's robe are not as they would actually appear where the cloth folds, and there is no source for the sharp light on the left side of Oliver's nose (*Works*, XIV, 10–12). In Augustus Egg's *"Come, Rest in This Bosom"* the shadows of the bars that appear on the wall should also have been visible at the window, but they are not (*Works*, XIV, 15). In J. R. Herbert's *Lear Recovering his Reason at the Sight of Cordelia* Ruskin notes that in addition to Herbert's inability to express intensity of expression, the jewels of the coronet should each reflect the light from the tent door "from a different spot on its surface," but here "every gem has actually the high light in the same spot, on the left-hand side, all round the brow" (*Works*, XIV, 18). The two sentences given to C. W. Cope's *Royal Prisoners, 1650* exemplify in miniature the typical form of his comments:

> A very beautiful and well-chosen subject, not ill painted. The spectator will see it to better advantage, if with his hand he will hide the guard's helmet, which projects into the light like the beak of a canoe, and appears, for a moment, to be the principal subject.
> (*Works*, XIV, 19)

It is precisely such dwelling on detail that is attacked in the strident *Art-Journal* review of Ruskin's "Notes" on the 1855 exhibi-

[20] Although Ruskin reviewed only the Royal Academy exhibition in 1855 (and in the isolated 1879 "Notes"), the 1856 through 1859 "Notes" included comments on the exhibitions held by the two water-color societies, the Society of British Artists, and the exhibition at Gambart's French Gallery.

tion[21] In any case, Ruskin's immediate appeal is a practical commonsense one, while his authority is understood to derive from principles elucidated elsewhere, the most basic of all being that the representation of the world as it is is the representation of God's intentions, to misrepresent is to traduce

Reading through the "Notes" on succeeding exhibitions, one finds much the same emphases: frequent praise for landscape painting with commendation for effects of light and shade, delicate representation of the graduations of color in natural objects, and accuracy of detail What Ruskin questions are failures of realism the clothes of a child who has fallen into water should look wet, the species of trees included in a painting should be identifiable, armor can be expected to reflect colors (*Works*, XIV, 54, 67, 110) Only very infrequently does a morally freighted comment appear, and then not as a condemnation of vice but as a comment on life or society in general, as in his 1857 appreciation of Frank Stone's *Bon Jour, Messieurs* for reminding the viewer that there is beauty and cheerfulness beyond "the grey streets of London" in which one finds "the gay carriages with the sorrowful faces in them" (*Works*, XIV, 112)

It is difficult adequately to assess Ruskin's motives in writing the "Notes" His preface to the first set describes them as a convenient means of responding to requests for guidance in viewing the Royal Academy exhibitions, but one can assume that Ruskin regarded the "Notes" as a ready means of educating viewers in the principles of good painting and encouraging closer attention, as a way of defending and extending the influence of the Pre-Raphaelite style of painting, or as increasing his own stature as England's preeminent arbiter in the field of art How effective the "Notes" were is a matter equally difficult to judge at this distance Despite dismissive comments in *Blackwood's* and *The Art-Journal*, a writer in *The Economist* for 13 June 1857 wrote

[21] See "Mr Ruskin's Notes on 'The Exhibition,'" *The Art-Journal* n s 1 (1855), 237–39 The hostility toward Ruskin of certain writers for the *Art-Journal* may in fact reflect the rivalry of the editor Samuel C Hall, who felt that he deserved primary credit for the undoubted advance in the prestige of English art and artists, see Hall's *Retrospect of a Long Life From 1815 to 1883* (New York D Appleton, 1883) pp 194–209 No doubt the *Art-Journal* did play an important role, one perhaps still insufficiently acknowledged

> Mr Ruskin's *Notes* have by this time attained a degree of popularity that renders their verdicts of extreme practical importance to all exhibitors They are in almost as universal use as the catalogues, and to many must serve as sole guide to the excellences of the yearly Exhibitions (*Works*, XIV, 147n)

The "Notes" themselves were reviewed almost every year by *The Art-Journal* and each year from 1855 to 1859 there were other reviews One must therefore doubt the judgment expressed by R H Wilenski that "*Academy Notes* had little or no effect on public taste."[22] The fact is that a closer study of the "Notes" than seems yet to have been carried out would be of real value—the great difficulty in adequately pursuing this study lies in the need to track down and actually view as many as possible of the paintings Ruskin mentions

Ruskin's aesthetic or, as he would phrase it, theoretic principles proved yet more directly practical when he turned his attention to architecture Charles Eastlake's *History of the Gothic Revival* (1872) cites the numerous sources of the

[22] *John Ruskin An Introduction to Further Study of His Life and Work* (London Faber and Faber 1933), p 380 On the other hand one must guard against exaggerating Ruskin's powers For instance, in his deservedly well-known *Victorian Painters* Maas writes that Ruskin 'had only to wonder why no-one ever painted apple-trees in blossom for the Academy walls a year later to be covered with orchards full of apple-trees in blossom' (p 17) Actually, Ruskin had asked in the 1858 'Notes' why no Pre-Raphaelites had painted scenes from an English spring in particular "a cherry-tree in blossom dark-white against the twilight of April nor an almond-tree rosy on the blue sky, nor the flush of the apple-blossom, nor a blackthorn hedge, nor a wild-rose hedge, nor a bank with crown-circlets of the white nettle, nor a wood-ground of hyacinths, no, nor even heather" (*Works*, XIV, 154) The actual sequel as reported by Cook and Wedderburn, who in turn are citing *The Economist* for 28 May 1859 was that "*three* distinguished artists had set themselves the task in consequence" (*Works* XIV, xxiv, emphasis added) Ruskin's comment on painting the natural beauties of spring achieved a kind of notoriety it is quoted derisively in *Blackwood's* in August 1858 (see 'London Exhibitions and London Critics,' *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, 84 [1858], 183–84) Ruskin had a year earlier questioned why "no flower-painter has yet been moved to draw a cluster of boughs of peach blossom, or cherry blossom or apple blossom just as they grow with the deep blue sky between every bud and petal" (*Works*, XIV, 116)

revival prior to Ruskin.[23] In addition to Pugin, Eastlake discusses the continuation of the Gothic tradition even after Inigo Jones, and the return of that tradition in Walpole's Strawberry Hill, the early-nineteenth-century books illustrating English Gothic buildings, and the Cambridge Camden Society and its magazine, *The Ecclesiologist* (founded 1841). Nevertheless, no one denies that the influence of Ruskin's championing of the Gothic was enormous. Both Eastlake and Kenneth Clark, whose *Gothic Revival* covers largely the same ground, attribute much of that influence to his avoidance of sectarian theological arguments.[24] Writes Eastlake: "His book, therefore, found favour with a large class of readers who had turned from Pugin's [Roman Catholic] arguments with impatience, and to whom even the [high Anglican] 'Ecclesiologist' had preached in vain" (p. 266). Clark's comment is that Ruskin "succeeded in disinfecting Gothic architecture" (p. 196). But while it is undoubtedly true that Ruskin separated praise of Gothic architecture from advocacy of Roman Catholicism (a highly practical move), it is of equal practical importance that he provided a moral rationale. A useful contrast can be drawn with Gilbert Scott's 1857 *Remarks on Secular and Domestic Architecture*.[25] Scott argues very clearly and reasonably for the Gothic on the grounds of its

[23] See Charles L. Eastlake, *A History of the Gothic Revival: An Attempt to Show How the Taste for Mediaeval Architecture which Lingered in England during the Last Two Centuries Has Since Been Encouraged and Developed* (London: Longmans, Green, 1872). This Charles Eastlake (1836–1906) is the one who served as keeper of the National Gallery, not the seventh president of the Royal Academy (1793–1865).

[24] See Kenneth Clark, *The Gothic Revival: An Essay in the History of Taste* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Wilson, 1928). The great difference between Eastlake's volume and Clark's lies not in the information they offer but in the taste of the two authors. While deprecating meretricious false practices, Eastlake strongly approved the Gothic Revival; Clark abominated it.

[25] George Gilbert Scott, *Remarks on Secular and Domestic Architecture, Present and Future* (London: John Murray, 1857). The shift in the acceptability of the Gothic is nowhere better illustrated than in Scott's eighteen Royal Academy lectures favoring Gothic architecture, nine of which were delivered in the late 1850s before Scott assumed the professorship in 1866. See Scott's *Lectures on the Rise and Development of Mediaeval Architecture, Delivered at the Royal Academy*, 2 vols. (London: John Murray, 1879). Scott, who began building in the perpendicular and early English styles in the early 1840s, can hardly be regarded as a disciple of Ruskin (although he occasionally cites him in his lectures), but widespread intellectual enthusiasm for the Gothic was clearly the result of Ruskin's works.

utility (for him its beauty is seen to grow from its utility) as well as on the grounds that the pointed style is England's native architecture, but despite Scott's love of the Gothic (hardly to be doubted of the architect of the St. Pancras station hotel), his text is not of the kind to arouse enthusiasm or commitment. Although it may seem paradoxical to the late-twentieth-century reader, a moral argument for the Gothic was the most effective for influencing the largest number of readers. This is of course not to say that Ruskin's appeal to moral principles was specious. The central, deeply felt argument of *The Seven Lamps of Architecture* (1849) and *The Stones of Venice* (1851–53) is morally based. Ruskin's entire perspective in these volumes is in notable contrast to that of the series of essays making up his first published prose, *The Poetry of Architecture* (1837–38).[26] There he had been concerned solely with the principles that make cottages and villas aesthetically appealing in different climates and national cultures. That the picturesqueness of certain peasant cottages results from the extreme poverty of its inhabitants seems not to trouble the young Ruskin; what Joan Evans nicely terms "the picturesque fallacy" (p. 59) informs *The Poetry of Architecture*, placing total emphasis on the effect the exterior of a cottage or villa produces on an observer, with no consideration of comfort or convenience. By the time of the writing of *The Seven Lamps of Architecture* Ruskin's aesthetics have begun to fuse with practical social morality—practical in that awareness of the practices of the production and the qualities of life and thought associated with a building affect aesthetic response.

Another view of the strategic efficacy of Ruskin's treatment of the Gothic presents itself if we turn again to the Royal Academy and compare Academy doctrines in place at the time Ruskin began to write, as presented in the lectures of Sir John Soane, the professor of architecture from 1806–1837. Soane is especially important as the representative of architecture as taught at the Royal Academy—his were the only lectures published by an Academy professor of architecture in the years

[26] The fourteen papers making up *The Poetry of Architecture* first appeared under the pseudonym *Kataphusin* in J. C. Loudon's *The Architectural Magazine* from December 1837 to December 1838 (see Joan Evans, *John Ruskin* [New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1954], pp. 58–61).

preceding Ruskin's *Seven Lamps* and *Stones of Venice*. His tenure as professor (1806–1837) is also the longest.[27] Now while it is a commonplace that classical models were regarded by most architects of the early part of the century as the central source of inspiration, it is nevertheless surprising how total is Soane's dedication to the Greek orders. "The Greeks, it must be admitted, cultivated Architecture so successfully that they left to succeeding ages only the humble task of imitating their works—works which will be ever admired, but perhaps never be equalled."[28] Of the Doric, Ionic, and Corinthian orders Soane wrote: "these three Orders, although not of the same period, have been handed down to us in so perfect a state that all the ingenuity and powers of man have not been able to make any improvement therein, nor even to add a single member to either of them" (p. 28). Soane does recognize that "Nations have adopted different ideas of Building, depending on climate, materials, and other considerations," but nevertheless while "avoid[ing] servile imitation," architects must understand what the ancients "*would* have done" (p. 16).

After devoting the first four of his twelve lectures to Greek and Roman architecture, Soane announces, "in the next Lecture I shall be compelled to follow our Art into the Barbarism of the Dark Ages" (p. 76). But the reader of these lectures, thus prepared for an enumeration of the vices and defects of Gothic architecture, is surprised to discover that in the few pages (little more than half of Lecture 5) devoted to the Gothic mode, Soane actually says very little that is specifically negative. After dismissing Saxon and Norman buildings as exhibiting "prodigious clumsiness of Composition and gloominess of effect" (p. 79), within two pages Soane is presenting the virtues of the architecture he has elsewhere described as falling far below the classical standard. He speaks of the "inexpressible delight" with which the beholder regards the individual portions of the inte-

27 Soane's tenure is very nearly matched by that of the first professor of architecture, Thomas Sandby, whose lectures remain unpublished. Neither George Dance, the professor who immediately preceded Soane, nor William Wilkins, the one who immediately succeeded him, appear to have lectured at all.

28 John Soane, *Lectures on Architecture*, ed. Arthur T. Bolton (London: Sir John Soane's Museum, 1929), p. 21.

rior of buildings like Westminster Abbey and Salisbury Cathedral, and he continues

> If when satiated with this rich banquet, and recovered from the delirium produced by such a blaze of effect, the spectator places himself, as on a pivot, in the centre of the space where the nave intercepts the transept, he then perceives all the astonishing variety, harmony, and grandeur of the different masses, as well as the intricacy and movement of the whole assemblage, the play and contrast of light and shadow, assisted by the exclusion of all glaring lights (p 81)

Overall, in the few pages Soane devotes to Gothic architecture he has more to say in praise of it than in condemnation Besides the darkness and gloom of the Gothic ("more suitable to Montezuma's house of affliction" than "for the common habits of life") the only other specific disadvantage for Soane is that it "leaves only very inconsiderable spaces, wherein paintings, sculptures and mosaics can be introduced" (pp 82, 83)

It is clear that Soane does not want to linger over the Gothic and is anxious to get on to the period that was just beginning to be called the Renaissance (Soane's phrase is "the Revival of the Fine Arts" [p 85]) After a brief digression from his comments on the Gothic he writes "So irresistibly am I now within the magic circle of Grecian and Roman Art that it is impossible for me to look back and retrace my steps Let us therefore once more turn our eyes towards Italy" (pp 83–84) We can surmise that Soane never closely investigated Gothic buildings, overlooked the vast amount of ornamental carving to be found in Northern Gothic, and gave no thought to Venetian Gothic

I know of no evidence that Ruskin had read Soane's lectures, but what he does in *The Stones of Venice* nevertheless constitutes an effective response First, in that famous paragraph describing the difference between the climate of Greece and that of Northern Europe in the great chapter on the Gothic in the second volume of *Stones*, Ruskin speaks directly to Soane's point that architecture must take account of climate, use, and materials:

> The charts of the world which have been drawn up by modern science have thrown into a narrow space the expression of a vast amount of knowledge, but I have never yet seen any one pictorial enough to enable the spectator to imagine the kind of contrast in physical character which exists between Northern and Southern countries. . . . Let us, for a moment, try to raise ourselves even above the level of their [birds'] flight, and imagine the Mediterranean lying beneath us like an irregular lake, and all its ancient promontories sleeping in the sun. . . . Then let us pass farther towards the north, until we see the orient colours change gradually into a vast belt of rainy green . . . and then, farther north still, to see the earth heave into mighty masses of leaden rock and heathy moor. . . . (*Works*, X, 185–86)

It is worth noting that whereas in *The Poetry of Architecture* Ruskin had sought simply to correlate climate, the availability of materials, and his judgment of national characteristics with what is pleasing in the architecture of different regions, in *The Stones of Venice* the choice of architecture appropriate to its locale is a moral choice. The materially practical becomes practical morality.

Second, Ruskin's painstaking investigation of Gothic ornamentation answers the charge that the Gothic allows insufficient opportunities for sculpture. And third, his emphasis on Venetian Gothic not only allows for the inclusion of mosaic work but evades the charge of the necessary gloominess of Gothic architecture. My point is that, for all his rashness and apparently unaccommodating assertions of authority, just as in the case of his modification of Reynold's doctrines, Ruskin's mode of argument was in fact the kind that a reasonable debater might adopt. His adaptation of the principle of worship, which justified the painter's art, to the celebration of Gothic architecture could easily be accepted even by those who had been indoctrinated by Soane, for years the most influential of the Royal Academy professors of architecture. Thus in the late 1850s, while Gilbert Scott was arguing from an architect's point of view that Gothic was the most practical style of building because its features could be adapted so easily to meet a wide variety of exigencies (a point of course important to Ruskin), such considerations were unlikely to touch a reader's imagination. While Scott defined the

Gothic in terms of three wholly physical features—"the pointed arch, the mullioned window, and the high-pitched roof"—while arguing that "Gothic architecture is, in fact, the most free and unfettered of all styles," Ruskin spoke to a public that the Royal Academy's activity had helped prepare to think of art and architecture in relation to the quality of a culture as a whole.[29]

But Ruskin's practicality is shown perhaps most clearly in his very decision to turn his primary attention to architecture even before completing *Modern Painters*. For all his love of painting, the text that retrospectively seems the keystone of his work is *The Stones of Venice*. Ruskin wrote in the preface to Volume I of *The Stones of Venice* that "every man has, at some time of his life, personal interest in architecture" (*Works*, IX, 9), but it is evident that in this passage "every man" really means every person with the money to own a house—a very small proportion of the people of England at the time. However, Ruskin had given his more general reasons for the importance of architecture in *Seven Lamps*. The aphorism found on the first page of the first chapter is "All architecture proposes an effect on the human mind, not merely a service to the human frame" (*Works*, VIII, 27). Toward the end of the last chapter Ruskin wrote, "I believe architecture must be the beginning of arts, and that the others must follow her in their time and order, and I think the prosperity of our schools of painting and sculpture . . . depends upon that of our architecture" (*Works*, VIII, 255). But architecture is not only the mother of the other arts; while *The Stones of Venice*, especially the great central chapter "On the Nature of Gothic," develops the case for regarding the Gothic as the exemplification of Christian virtues and as the type of building most amenable to the proper exercise of workers' skills, the implicit argument is that architecture is the most visible, the most public of the arts.[30] Although it had become increasingly pos-

[29] Scott, *Remarks on Secular and Domestic Architecture, Present and Future*, 2d ed. (London: John Murray, 1858), pp. 46–47. For Ruskin on the serviceability of the Gothic, see for instance the well-known passage in *The Stones of Venice* beginning "For in one point of view Gothic is not only the best, but the *only rational* architecture, as being that which can fit itself most easily to all services, vulgar or noble" (*Works*, X, 211–12).

[30] This argument begins to be enunciated in *The Poetry of Architecture* (see esp. *Works*, I, 132–33), but there Ruskin is primarily interested not in moral emphases but "the formation of taste."

sible for people of all classes to view painting and sculpture, Ruskin seems to have seen that, after all, only the comparatively wealthy could have fine art around them, and it was impossible for the poorest classes—still a very large and terribly deprived portion of the population in Ruskin's time—to have any attractive, not to say beautiful, objects in their homes. The one art that the average individual might encounter with any frequency was architecture. As remarked by Edward Barry, the Academy's professor of architecture from 1874 to 1880 and a man who was more influenced by Ruskin than perhaps he himself realized, a noble building is possessed by all who see it, including "the hewers of wood and the drawers of water."[51]

Ruskin's success undoubtedly resulted in great part from his command of style and from the dearth of writing that gave popularly acceptable grounds for the arts, but the degree to which his central argument seemed a wholly reasonable underpinning for a relationship between art and faith gave them a special resonance. Ruskin could be harsh enough in his comments on the Royal Academy,[52] but his presentation of an acceptable rationale for the kind of painting increasingly to be found in Academy (and the other major) exhibitions, together with an argument championing Gothic architecture without wholly discrediting what had been the accepted Academy teachings, made his writing seem no less reasonable than revolutionary. By modifying and supplementing Academy principles, Ruskin carried them to conclusions that their sponsors had not foreseen. Outrageous as some of his arguments and judgments may seem a century and a half later, their foundations were in basic harmony with the general culture of the time. Thus central cultural currents were both enunciated and partly redirected by Ruskin, the Academy's outsider.

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[51] Edward Barry, *Lectures on Architecture, Delivered at the Royal Academy* (London: John Murray, 1881), p. 32.

[52] For example: "It is interesting, especially, to see that, in the present state of British science, one may write R.A. after one's name, yet not be able to paint a gutter" (*Works*, XIV, 220; see also XIV, 284).

Reviews

David H. Richter, *The Progress of Romance: Literary Historiography and the Gothic Novel.* Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1996. Pp. xii + 242. $39.95.

David Richter subtitles his book "Literary Historiography and the Gothic Novel," and his study is concerned as much with the question of literary history as with the details of Gothic fiction. Early on, he deplores the lack of a history of the Gothic novel. Since the days of Montague Summers and Devendra Varma, who wrote histories of the Gothic that he sees as fundamentally flawed, Richter acknowledges only partly helpful readings and ideologically charged criticism of the Gothic that, even in the best cases, can never measure up to his Chicago-School-inspired notion of what literary history should be. A history of Gothic fiction, or of any genre with as clear a beginning and middle and as profuse an end as Gothic fiction, would seem an attractive proposition, but even a casual reading of R. S. Crane's *Critical and Historical Principles of Literary History* would make it clear that such a history of 150 years of Gothic fiction would be tantamount to a cultural study of such gargantuan proportions that only perhaps one literary historian in a generation would be man enough—it would have to be a man, of course—to take it on. We have all been led to believe that for the last twenty years David Richter has seen himself as that man. Every objection he has raised to the rich and exhilarating range of criticism that has emerged around Gothic fiction promised that he had something more to offer. And I trust that I am not the only one who will hold this study to the standard that Richter himself has articulated and insist that if it does not succeed as a history of Gothic fiction—if it does not practice, that is, what it preaches—it could not really be said to succeed at all.

Instead of writing the history of Gothic fiction that he has promised, however, Richter struggles with a few questions about literary historiography, insisting along the way that earlier studies of the Gothic have dehistoricized it and that psychological, Marxist, and feminist

"fudges" all point to something dramatically wrong with current critical practice. I disagree with this assessment for a number of reasons, most strenuously because what the most recent generation of Gothic critics and historians has taught us is something about our own fascination with a body of work deemed so conventional, so predictable, and so sensationalistic. I do not disagree that questions of literary historiography can be interesting or even that the Chicago School of critics—R. S. Crane, Sheldon Sacks, Ralph Rader, and Richter himself—have a great deal to offer students of the eighteenth century. But I will never agree that artistic choice is as free as such critics would like to see it or that forms are not in every case at least partially culturally determined. Richter is right to attempt something of this kind not only because we have come to consider the question of literary history so anthologically and at times haphazardly pluralistic, but also because he is thoughtful, articulate, and committed to a set of beliefs that are clear in their claims and organized in their presentation. For lack of a better term, we can call these beliefs a new formalism, and without disservice to Richter we could say that he does not exactly want to jettison the latest generation (or two) of critical and theoretical thought and return to a lost ideal of a purely formal literary world. Instead he wants to salvage just those bits of the current critical argument that allow him to make the formalist argument all the more strongly and to claim that after Marx, and Macherey, and Jauss, he can still say that artistic individuality is the primary guarantee of literary merit.

Richter says that his approach to literary history—in this volume at least—can be sketched as "syncretism of Marxist, formalist, and receptionist historiography" (p. 19). I do not want to reduce the complex model he builds over the course of several chapters to a few mocking sentences, nor do I want to pretend that this material is not sophisticated and thought-provoking. At its best, it represents a major statement in a tradition wider than the "Chicago-School" label would suggest. Richter argues energetically that Gothic fiction is historically invested and that an inattention to historical concerns is fatal to the critic of the Gothic. He argues a formal tradition that begins with *Pamela* (although a reading of *The Imaginary Puritan: Literature, Intellectual Labor, and the Origins of Personal Life* [1992] by Nancy Armstrong and Leonard Tennenhouse might have convinced him to look to a different model). And he repeatedly argues that historiography is not to be left behind in the "ideological" quest for new ideas and new approaches. I hope that it does not sound unfair for me to say that in spite of his historical concerns, Richter wears his Marxism lightly and

continually bases his literary judgments on primarily formalist concerns Slavoj Žižek offers us a way to understand form from a Marxist perspective, of course, but Richter ignores this Marxist formalism in favor of the by now questionable receptionism of Jauss and the useful but limited theorizations of Macherey Žižek says that ideology works most effectively at the level of form He argues that in the theories of both Freud and Marx there is an understanding of the significance of form in the basic structures of psychological or political control For instance, it is necessary to reveal the "secret" value of commodities not behind commodity-form, where classical bourgeois political economy looks for it "classical political economy is interested only in contents concealed behind the commodity-form, which is why it cannot explain the true secret, not the secret *behind* the form but *the secret of this form itself*" For Žižek, a dream works similarly—"even after we have explained its hidden meaning, its latent thought, the dream remains an enigmatic phenomenon, what is not yet explained is simply its form, the process by means of which the hidden meaning disguised itself in such a form"—and form itself begins to have a power all its own When the "forms" are followed, even if they are recognized to be hollow, the ideological effect takes place (see Slavoj Žižek, *The Sublime Object of Ideology* [London Verso, 1989], pp 15–16) If Richter could follow the implications of his Gothic interest in this direction, he might accomplish something as historically startling as critically new Instead he combines a vaguely Marxist reading with a classic reception theory to suggest that "we can understand the historical significance of the Gothic novel if we conceive of it as a production of ideology appropriate for the age of the French Revolution, an age in which the chains of feudal authority were snapped less by the violent fury of the people than by an equally sudden deflation of belief in the source of that authority" (p 81) It is hard not to wonder how Richter is using "ideology" here and how the French Revolution can work as anything but another question in this context If I were to say that a group of wealthy homosexuals and apolitical women are probably not going to respond first to political concerns of this kind and that it might be as useful historically to consider the codification of gendered subjectivity and intensely personal modes of erotic titillation as a more inclusive source of ideological energy, then I would be able to admit psychological and political readings of a kind that Richter dismisses My approach would be closer to what we have as a body of Gothic criticism, of course, than it would be to what Richter wishes we had Literary history of this kind would not only expose the cultural complicity

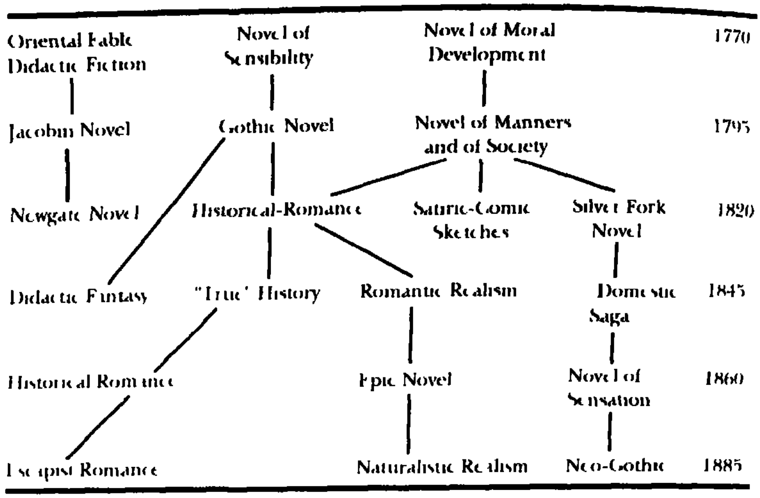
behind certain literary developments, it would explain the role of literature itself in containing desire and rendering the pain of human experience darkly and secretly pleasurable

I think the relation between ideology and form is promising enough, but I cannot agree that Richter has done all he could to make this relation critically useful If we look at the history of Gothic fiction that he offers, we do not find the last word we might have been led to expect, though we do find some interesting observations and a useful detail or two But to think that we will be satisfied with Richter's brash dismissal of other critical approaches in order to tell us that the eighteenth-century Gothic can be seen as an extension of Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto* (1764)—concerned, as that novel is, with either "Isabella's Tale," i e , "Gothic novels where the protagonist is an exemplary man or woman" [who suffers], and "Manfred's Tale," "where the protagonist is a morally reprehensible villain" [who inflicts suffering] (p 93)—is to misunderstand where Gothic criticism stands in 1996 The additions to Richter's dichotomy are my own, and I would claim that they already make Richter's terms more interesting I have no trouble seeing Walpole's novel as the Ur-text, nor do I disagree that Gothic novels alternate between the suffering woman (and often her emasculated male friend) and the erotically threatening aggressive man (or occasionally woman) That many Gothic novels contain both tales is no cause for concern For just as *The Castle of Otranto* is itself unclear where the real interest lies, so most Gothic novels—from *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, through *Wuthering Heights*, and including *The Monk*, *Melmoth the Wanderer*, *Zofloya*, *Frankenstein*, *The Turn of the Screw*, *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*, *The Haunting of Hill House*, and Anne Rice's *Vampire Chronicles*—can be read as finding more interest in the male or female villain than in the innocent heroine or hero This is such a central feature of the Gothic that it does not really work as a distinguishing feature, but then, what does? Richter shows that it is not supernatural, nor setting, nor narrative structure, nor basic conventions, nor feminist or sexual concerns In place of these he asserts "history" in a way that defuses the Gothic of its unique interest and renders it a sanitized product with nothing but superficial significance

Richter's chapter on the eighteenth-century Gothic mentions one or two texts that are not in the regular canon of acceptable Gothic (flawed) masterpieces, which includes *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, *The Monk*, *Frankenstein*, *Melmoth the Wanderer*, and *The Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner* He mentions *The Old English Baron* and

The Recess in passing, and he repeatedly refers to the 208 titles in Ann Tracy's collection of Gothic plots. But he does very little with these works to enrich previous histories or even to match their brilliance—and instead he leaves us more or less where we started. He claims for instance that we need to understand a text like *The Castle of Otranto* "in the context of . . . contradictory ideological uses of medievalism in the latter part of the eighteenth century," but then he goes on to show that most Gothicists—Ann Radcliffe and others—are only vague in historical reference. He shows that frequently the power exerted by Gothic villains is so great that it can only be evaded by treating it as a kind of "dream of oppression" (p. 82), but he seems unwilling to look further into the dreamworlds of the Gothic. Finally, he argues that "the Gothic novel sits astride a major shift in the response of readers to literature, . . . a shift from reading for information, and for the sake of entry into a verisimilar world otherwise inaccessible to the reader, toward reading as an escape from the world one inhabits into an inner site of fantasy" (pp. 112–13). This is an interesting point but not a very startling one, and the primarily affective features of Gothic fiction have been a critical commonplace for nearly a decade.

With the nineteenth-century Gothic, Richter takes exactly the opposite approach and offers lists and flowcharts to demonstrate lines of influence and patterns of development. He does quite a bit to sort novels into groups on the basis of plot and character, and he makes a convincing case for certain lines of interest. But this is not really the rich historical analysis we have been waiting for. I would be hard-pressed to explain the thesis of this chapter except to say that Richter "goes through" dozens of novels in an attempt to place them in some kind of meaningful relation to one another. It is taxonomy, however, rather than deep historical analysis. We hear, for instance, that "the generic backdrop against which the [late-nineteenth-century] neo-Gothic emerges is another transitional period" (p. 139), that "the socioeconomic impulses behind both Verne and Wells were industrialization and imperialism" (p. 146), and that "the atmospheric world of adult fantasy varies a great deal, but one could say rather roughly that it is compounded of three simples mixed in varying degrees: the epic, the fairy tale, and the Gothic" (p. 148). This strikes me as the worst kind of historical generalization, and throughout this chapter thumbnail analyses substitute for any sustained critical or historical analysis. What they tell us can be summed up by the following example:



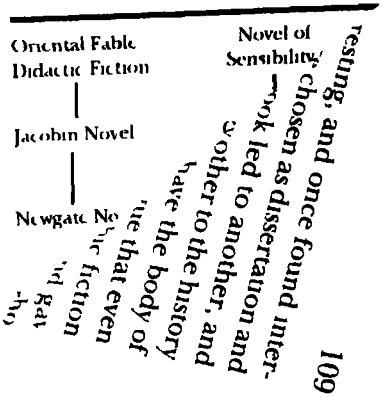
Who hasn't stooped to using such devices in describing "the development of the English novel" or "the varieties of English comedy" to a group of undergraduates? But is this really a substitute for the kinds of readings that Christopher Craft, Judith Halberstam, Eve Sedgwick, and Judith Wilt have offered? I think not. I think Richter condemns earlier studies, ignores them, or files them in his list of works cited at his peril. The Gothic history that he writes is not up to the standard that he himself has articulated.

Richter says that studies of the Gothic that emerged in the late seventies and continued through the eighties and nineties are to be dismissed as careerist and uninteresting. He says that he hopes "it would not be too cynical to suggest that intellectual concerns of this sort may reflect not only a change in the ideology attaching to literature but also material professional needs. . . . Here we need to remember that the enormous growth in college teaching in the postwar years generated an equally intense need for new subjects about which academics could write books and achieve tenure and promotion" (p. 3). Well, it *would* be too cynical. I have yet to meet anyone who has written a book solely because it would guarantee promotion. Indeed, I would argue that many writers, myself included, chose "the Gothic" in spite of the threat that tenure and promotion was precisely what it would not guarantee. Nor is it difficult to imagine an alternative scenario: the seventies saw the publication of Gothic novels in easily available editions; this meant that they were more regularly set for classes and seminars and that they were more widely read than in previous

years, once read, they were found interesting, and once found interesting and relatively unexplained, they were chosen as dissertation and book topics As in any field, one interesting book led to another, and a field of popular fiction at least as important as any other to the history of fiction (as Richter himself might allow) began to have the body of criticism that perhaps it had always deserved I would argue that even the most distinguished critics who have written about Gothic fiction have done so because they liked it I could add that lesbian and gay literary studies got their start in the Gothic and that many writers who went on to become important voices in this field got their start as Gothic critics This is not to give undue importance to Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, although I will quickly admit that I am one of those who feel that her contribution to literary studies is not to be overestimated, but if I find that one after another Queer theorist actually wrote her or his dissertation on Gothic fiction, I may be allowed to claim that Isabella's Tale and Manfred's Tale have more resonances than Richter has dared to consider The ideology of the situation in which critics open up an area of literary investigation is too big a topic for this review I would only remind David Richter that the work of his celebrated Chicago School is as ideologically invested as any Marxist, feminist, or gay critical approach, and I would claim further that the assumptions behind the Chicago School's appeal to literary distinction are less honest and less helpful than the admission by these other approaches that all criticism is ideologically invested

In the end, I would recommend *The Progress of Romance* to anyone who is looking for a way to resist current trends in the academy and to anyone who enjoys the kinds of historical arguments for which Richter is already familiar I would recommend it furthermore to literary historians of various kinds, if only because it is learned and thoughtful and because parts of it are a good deal more complex than I have been able to suggest But I would recommend it to students of the Gothic only with the caveat that there is a great deal else that is more interesting and more rewarding to read

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ICK, *Poetic Madness and* ennsylvania State Univer-

Frederick Burwick, found- w, has emerged as the most itry of the British and Euro- ooks such as *The Haunted Eye* *m and the Drama* (1991), and sed complex problems from a gle His particular interest has earance, and the workings of il nakes the progression from illu- etic madness"

sion ...

What Burwi... poetic madness," however, is far more than mere delusion o... ented raving In linking it to "the Romantic imagination" he points to the close connection between madness and the inspiration innate to artistic creativity As he concedes, "the notion that creative genius is impelled by madness has a venerable tradition" (p 3), which he traces back to its classical sources In the era of rationalism, the mad rhapsodist, always suspect, became even more so But with a mad king (George III) on the throne of England, the boundaries of madness were under constant renegotiation, although the incipient shift from the miraculous to the pathological view cast a distinct shadow on the old relationship between creativity and madness While Burwick wisely refrains from trying to apply Freudian, Jungian, or Lacanian models, he does contextualize in the prevailing social and medical attitudes, and he might well have done more so, since the period under analysis coincides with the time of the crucial turn away from the mere restraint of the insane to experiments with "moral treatment" in hopes of a rehumanizing response He has interesting material on the incidence of ergot poisoning, which very likely affected Blake and probably Nerval too Occasionally he speculates on such modern diagnoses as schizophrenia or severe manic-depressive syndrome, but his primary focus is on "the strange entanglement of life and art, reality and imagination" (p 7) evident in the mad poet

Burwick investigates his topic under three major headings "Poetics of Madness," "Narratives of Madness," and "Mad Poets," each of which in turn comprises three chapters The opening third of the book offers a survey of changing and conflicting theories of the interface of genius, madness, and inspiration from the mid eighteenth cen-

tury onward The testimonies on behalf of epiphanic and ecstatic inspiration voiced by the exponents of the German Storm and Stress amounted to an endorsement of irrational enthusiasm that led to an entrapment in a mode of artistic expression addressed only to the passions Essentially this posture summarizes the dilemma posed by the mad rhapsodist Coleridge and De Quincey are united in their defense of the miracles of inspiration and revelation, but the definition of poetic faith as the willing suspension of disbelief leaves open the possibility that the mad poet, only half in control of the making and shaping of the literary text, may taint the whole with the ferment of irrationality

The manifestations of the aesthetics of the "Other Half" are explored in Part 2 in a series of works The first and the third chapters are devoted primarily to Goethe's *Torquato Tasso* and to Blake, respectively, while in the second chapter Burwick ranges very widely from Diderot through Novalis, Hoffmann, Shelley, Eichendorff, and De Quincey to Nodier in tracing visionary excursions beyond the boundaries of reason and the various kinds of paradox they engender He underscores the fundamental paradoxicality of narratives of madness, but he also argues persuasively for bimodality rather than bipolarity, for the simultaneous identity as well as alterity of signifier and signified

The three "Mad Poets" of the concluding part are Holderlin, Clare, and Nerval What makes this section particularly interesting is the recurrence of intertextuality as the vehicle for self-expression Hölderlin is not only mediated through Arnim's "Walks with Holderlin," but in "Patmos" he enters the mental range of St John and the New Testament stories of the Last Supper so that Arnim's essay is itself "a hermeneutic of that [Holderlin's reprise of St John] hermeneutic" (p 216) Similarly, Nerval's writing represents "a rewriting of the self, a repetition and a displacement of the very agonies of his own identity" (p 229) through Madame de Stael's reading of Jean Paul Even more clearly, Clare in his "Childe Harold" reads himself through a deliberate adoption not only of a Byronic pose but also of a resonance of his rhetoric and rhyme, though he tempers Byronic tensions with a pastoral Wordsworthian tranquility Burwick could profitably have delved more deeply into these reiterated instances of the mad self having recourse to an other in an endeavor to interpret itself

The book suffers, ironically, from what is also its cardinal virtue, namely its ample range over English, German, and French theories and texts Burwick tends to overload his densely packed arguments with too much material, although the central theme is evident, it be-

comes difficult at times to hang on to the guiding thread of "poetic madness" through all its manifold ramifications As a result, this study, though well written, is demanding on the reader, even one familiar with the languages, which are cited sometimes in translation only and sometimes in both original and translation Nonetheless, this is a notable contribution to the critical literature on romanticism

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JEROME BEATY, *Misreading "Jane Eyre" A Postformalist Paradigm* Columbus Ohio State University Press, 1996 Pp xvi + 259 $35

There are two ways of describing this book On the one hand it is a traditional work of literary history, situating *Jane Eyre* in the context of other novels and kinds of novels (the Gothic novel, the governess novel, the fictional autobiography, etc) that were familiar to Charlotte Bronte and/or her readers, and of the topoi (mad wife, child death, interrupted wedding) that could occur in them Moving carefully through the text of *Jane Eyre*, Beaty spots innumerable details that fit or depart from the expectations generated by the context of preceding fiction Thus when Jane advertises for a situation as governess, the suggestion that she advertise instead of answering advertisements is dropped on her pillow by a "kind fairy" Beaty identifies the fairy as deriving from Rachel McCrindell's novel *The English Governess* (1844), and he suggests that such faint echoes, "audible only to those whose ears are tuned to the voice of the governess genre," can add to our suspense—in this case explaining Jane's nervousness and her relief when the answer comes from a Mrs Fairfax, who writes in a responsible old-fashioned hand "like that of an elderly lady" In this case the contextualizing involves the application of a generic norm, but more often Beaty is concerned to show how *Jane Eyre* does not fit the expectations of the contemporary reader, either because it mingles the genres or because it departs from the generic expectation it invokes He goes so far as to claim that departure from expected narrative patterns sometimes leaves the reader in "limbo, wasteland, wilderness" That clearly would be a reader whose interest in generic patterns had made him a slave to conventions

Our expectations of what is likely to happen next derive, of course, not only from other novels but also, as we read, from the context pro-

vided by the novel we are actually reading, so in Part 2 Beaty moves from literary history to text-immanent discussion The most interesting parts of this discussion concern the shifts between character and narrator, which in a first-person novel means, of course, between the young Jane who is experiencing and the Jane Rochester who is telling the story with hindsight Beaty is very observant here, and he has some beautifully precise insights to offer, noticing all the details that identify a sentence as coming from one or the other Jane, such as quotation marks or shifts between past and present tense, and he even suggests that the sentence when she is taken in by the Rivers ("I thanked God—experienced amidst unutterable exhaustion a glow of grateful joy—and slept") "is so thoroughly double-voiced that young Jane is grateful to the family and the narrator to God " Charlotte Bronte would surely have enjoyed the neatness of that

The other way of describing the book is as a contribution to the theoretical discussions of our own time The main masters here are Bakhtin and Iser, both frequently drawn on for formulations of the nature of the reading experience Thus the encounter between the young and the narrating Jane is characterized in terms of "hybridization," which involves two language consciousnesses and presents "the collision between the differing points of views [*sic*] on the world that are embedded in these forms " From Iser he derives terminology for the way a fictional text recombines social and literary conventions, taking them out of their social or fictional contexts and transforming them into objects of scrutiny, thus enabling the reader to "recodify, defamiliarize and reassess the social and historical norms "

Both of these books (that is, both these elements in the one book) are well done Beaty is an excellent literary historian and a careful reader his knowledge of forgotten nineteenth-century novels is enormous and well used, so that he can tell us when *Jane Eyre* follows and when it departs from the conventions that (some) contemporary readers would have looked for, for the novel asserts its individuality "not in spite of conventions but through them " Beaty is at home too with recent theoretical discussions of fiction, and he uses the concepts with the kind of critical scrutiny that presupposes a perceptive understanding If I now interrogate the project of this book and ask how well the two aims sit together, this is not intended as a reproach to Beaty, it is rather to apply the Iser paradigm to itself and to ask what happens when the critic "reorganizes" the theoretical terms of the narratologist, taking them out of their theoretical context and enabling them to "become subjects of scrutiny in themselves "

In a word, does the first of Beaty's projects need the second?

Does the theory he deploys enable him to formulate insights he would otherwise not have attained to, or does it offer him only a different (and more ponderous) terminology for expressing the insights any shrewd reader will have? To be told that the term "autobiography" in 1847 "from its novelty and varied appearances was dialogically refracted" is satisfying to the Bakhtinian, but it does not differ from being told that it was "both familiar and strange," because there were very different kinds of fictional "autobiographies" available to the reader "Refraction" is an important concept for Beaty, since his historical learning enables him to point out the occasions when the reader might be uncertain what species of novel he is reading "as a result each scene and narrative move is occupied by 'alien words,' by scenic topoi and generic conventions that refract the Bronte text" Literary historians have always placed a particular novel in the context of those that preceded it, and the good ones have been aware that the relationship is not one of mere copying, that the major novelists use their predecessors, in Ben Jonson's words, as guides not commanders The point is old, the terminology new

To ask whether the insights of this book always need the theoretical terminology is not necessarily a reproach it raises the question of audience It is absurd to deny that academic inquiry involves theorizing, though we may still feel that some kinds of theorizing belong to literary study, others to philosophy Now that the systems of Bakhtin and Iser are so widespread among students of literature, it is understandable that a professor engaged in dialogue with his peers should use them, and this is clearly a book (as *Nineteenth-Century Literature* is clearly a journal) written for academics But within any self-respecting literary academic there lurks (or should lurk) a general reader, one who need not be ashamed of claiming that the insights do not need the terminology, even (on occasion) that they might be clearer without it

I do not make this last impudent point about Beaty in particular, in whom theory hardly ever obliterates awareness of the actual literary work (I originally wrote "never obliterates," but then I recalled Beaty's fondness for distinguishing "seeing the text as it does not see itself" from "seeing it as it could not see itself," which looks like a distinction without a difference) But I will conclude with a point where, it seems to me, he is overeager to castigate a fellow academic In his discussion of Barry Qualls's "humanist" reading of *Jane Eyre* Beaty finds a "distortion or misreading" resulting from a refusal to take seriously the possibility that Jane might marry St John Now Beaty himself, in a brilliant epilogue called "Decentering the Author," shows

hat however carefully the author leads us to reject the rebellious Jane of the early chapters, the clues to authorial intention that are so neticulously planted cannot abolish the reading experience we have lready derived from these chapters and the intensity with which we nay there identify with Jane's defiance We all know D H Lawrence's tow time-honored, untheoretical precept, "Never trust the artist, rust the tale " That is the position that Beaty unpacks in this theory-iden epilogue, and it does not seem difficult to use it to defend Qualls)o, and to show that his reading of *Jane Eyre* is not all that different rom Beaty's The attempts of Beaty the theoretician to control Beaty he reader have much in common with those of Jane Rochester to ontrol the younger, passionate Jane, including the fact that they do iot always succeed

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SHEILA POST-LAURIA, *Correspondent Colorings Melville in the Marketplace* Amherst University of Massachusetts 'ress, 1996 Pp xvi + 276 $50 cloth, $17 95 paper

Sheila Post-Lauria joins the growing ranks of cholars engaged in the important project of reevaluating the works nd careers of major nineteenth-century American writers in the ontext of the literary culture of their day In arguing that her book hallenges conventional views [of Melville as] an alienated, frusated artist who felt hostile and superior to his culture" (p xv), Post-auria is not so much staking out a new position as adding another ail to the coffin of such "conventional views " Once we recognize iat Melville, like the other classic writers of the American Renaisince, was by both choice and necessity deeply implicated in the comlex dynamics of literary production and consumption of his day, it ecomes reductive, inadequate, and even misleading to represent the igh-Romantic writers merely as alienated, oppositional figures in reition to their culture

Although her title claims to situate Melville "in the Marketplace," ost-Lauria is not much interested in the economic aspects of Melle's career in the narrowest sense—in his publishing arrangements,)ntract terms, sales, or profits, or even in his sense of himself as a rofessional writer, rather, her chief interest is in the relation of his ction to popular literary genres of his day and in discriminating

among the different reading audiences for these several genres As such, her work is most closely related to David S. Reynolds's *Beneath the American Renaissance* (1988), which similarly argues that the writings of our classic American writers were profoundly affected and productively fertilized by popular literary forms, that their genius lay not in their resistance to these forms but in their innovative and groundbreaking exploitation of them As Post-Lauria explains, "I argue that Melville planned his works and based them on existing popular narrative forms now largely forgotten, that he aimed specific works for particular readerships that included (to borrow antebellum terminology) elite, literary, cultivated, general, and mass audiences, that he enjoyed a considerable popularity among his contemporaries, and finally that Melville considered his reliance on antebellum forms as fundamental both to his writing and to his creativity" (p xiii)

Post-Lauria treats all of Melville's major writings in this chronologically structured survey of his career, but there is less emphasis on tracing Melville's evolution as a writer than on carefully situating each work in its own contextual field of generically related popular writings She argues that, from the very outset of his career, Melville was responding deliberately and creatively to existing popular conventions

In her opening chapters, for example, Post-Lauria argues that we understand Melville's early novels only when we recognize that in each he was carefully exploring and exploiting the conventions of distinct subgenres of travel and sea narratives, and that each genre had its own identifiable audience Melville's awareness of these conventions and their respective audiences, for example, accounts for the "ideologically distinct" (p 28) American and English editions of *Typee* Such subtle generic distinctions further allow Post-Lauria to read *Omoo*, *Redburn*, and *White-Jacket* as innovative but recognizable examples of the "nautical reminiscence," a genre quite "distinct from the more romantic treatment of sea adventures published the previous decade" (p 48) Here, and throughout, Post-Lauria is especially good at surveying and characterizing a range of little-remembered but once-popular works that exemplify and define the various genres and subgenres she identifies She does an impressive job of drawing on contemporary reviews of these works to show us just how contemporary audiences understood the conventions to be working, as well as to distinguish among a range of intended audiences for these genres

When Post-Lauria turns to *Moby-Dick* and *Pierre*, her argument about generic contexts becomes even more crucial Drawing heavily upon Edward M Eigner's 1978 study, *The Metaphysical Novel in England and America Dickens, Bulwer, Melville and Hawthorne*, Post-Lauria

argues that *Moby-Dick*'s heterogeneity is neither confused nor improvisational but typical of the "metaphysical" or "mixed form" narrative, a controversial but quite recognizable subcategory of the romance much debated in the critical conversations of the time. Post-Lauria is most compelling and illuminating when she shows how the critical reception of *Moby-Dick* reflects the similarly divided reactions to "metaphysical" novels in general among critics and reviewers of the day, and that the genre was indeed the subject of considerable critical interest.

Turning to *Pierre*, Post-Lauria makes a compelling case for reading the novel not as a failed sentimental romance nor even as a satire of that genre, as modern critics have inclined to do, but as a clear example of the quite distinct genre of the French sensational romance. Again, Post-Lauria does a fine job of showing how the critical response to Melville's novel reflected the more general critical reception of the French sensational romance: the genre, clearly aimed at working-class and middle-class readers, was the subject of highly charged critical disputes, but, whatever their position, reviewers uniformly recognized *Pierre* as an example of the genre.

As Post-Lauria points out, *Pierre* represents not only a new genre for Melville but a new target audience as well. *Pierre* failed to reach that audience, Post-Lauria suggests, because the production and marketing of the novel were not adjusted to this new audience. What Post-Lauria does not address so clearly, however, is what drove Melville to turn to this new genre and new audience in the first place, when it meant effectively "repel[ling] the very critical mouths that had once fed him" (p. 145).

In Part 3 of her book Post-Lauria follows Melville into the periodical marketplace, beginning with an overview of the rise of periodical publication at this time. She argues that each magazine had its distinct style and audience and that writers such as Poe and Hawthorne clearly tailored their stories to the policies of the particular magazine in which they hoped to publish. This serves as prelude to her argument that Melville, too, "traded in the popular market by tailoring his submissions to adhere to the policies and stances of two monthlies that vied for top ratings, *Harper's Magazine* and *Putnam's Monthly*" (p. 163), the former being more conservative and inclined to the sentimental, the latter being more innovative and intellectually daring. That Melville adjusted his writing to the periodical is most clearly demonstrable, Post-Lauria suggests, when we look at the revisions Melville made in *Israel Potter*, which he first hoped to publish in *Harper's* but eventually placed in *Putnam's* instead.

Post-Lauria presses her case further by arguing that *The Confidence-*

Man, too, was composed with *Putnam's* readers in mind. While sh does a fine job of drawing together evidence that earlier *Putnam* pieces had indeed taken up the character of the confidence man an may in all likelihood have provided Melville with some of his sourc materials, Post-Lauria's argument finally seems strained by its narro insistence that Melville was deliberately writing for this particular au dience. She does not discuss the actual marketing of the novel or th commercial (versus critical) reception of the book. The fact of his pub lisher's subsequent bankruptcy and the change in editorship of *Pu nam's* do not seem sufficient to account for Melville's abandoning fi tion entirely after this point, either, though Post-Lauria argues th "from this moment, Melville no longer had a vehicle—either a crit cal magazine or a perceptive publisher—for reaching those reade who most appreciated his work" (p. 228).

By insisting that "we gain considerable insight into [Melville' actual compositional practices and the nature of his creativity whe we place his works in the context of his culture" (p. 230), Post-Laur opens up and explores an extremely valuable line of inquiry. Ther are points where her thesis-driven argument leads her into somewh narrow and unconvincing *ex post facto* readings of Melville's design and in her emphasis on generic conventions and critical receptio she sometimes leaves unanswered relevant questions about Melville own sense of his career or about the commercial arrangements an results of his publications. But this is a book that succeeds admirab in outlining the contours of the literary culture of Melville's day an in demonstrating that our understanding of Melville is deeply er riched by reading his work in the context of that culture.

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ALFRED HABEGGER, *The Father: A Life Henry James, Sr.* New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1994. Pp. viii 578. $30.

"Which was he, a terrifyingly gifted seer or crazed metaphysician?" This was, Alfred Habegger explains, one (the "unanswered questions" about Henry James, Sr., that "pressed o his children" (p. 8). Readers of Habegger's engaging and meticulous researched biography are likely to close the book with much the sam question. The force of James's personality, the complexity of h psyche, the vigor of his intellect—these all emerge unmistakably i

Habegger's volume. What remains unresolved, however, is the question that has persistently shadowed James's reputation: what was the significance of his philosophical accomplishment? Habegger leaves the impression that it was at best a mixed legacy, and he focuses our attention instead on the erratic course of James's intellectual development, the passion with which he played advocate for his constantly shifting theological positions, and the daunting intensity with which he undertook the role of father.

James's commitment to fatherhood was in part conditioned by his own difficulties as the son of the strong-willed and immensely successful William James of Albany. James had to push hard to free himself from his father's controlling authority, even though it was his father's accumulated fortune that provided him the opportunity to pursue a life of intellectual work and the unusual freedom to live where he chose. Choosing was the hard part for James. He bounced back and forth across the Atlantic repeatedly, seeking a refuge first from American and then from European narrowness and hoping to provide his children, especially his oldest son, William, with the perfect educational environment.

While it is hard to quibble with the results of this constant relocation in the cases of William and Henry, arguably our greatest philosopher and our greatest novelist, few readers will find James's restlessness a persuasive model of education or of family life. But despite their indecisive wandering, James and his wife, Mary Walsh James, seemed to foster an extraordinary family bond, even though the younger children—Alice, Bob, and Wilkie—did not thrive as well as their older brothers. Recent scholarship has recognized in Alice a representative woman intellectual, and Habegger makes it clear that the family's perpetual uprooting was particularly damaging to her, robbing her of the stability conducive to durable and productive social relationships.

James's struggle with the burden of a domineering father was complicated by the psychic impact of the amputation of his leg after a childhood injury. Habegger connects this injury with occasional bouts of depressive lethargy, most dramatically in the debilitating "vastation," a severe "psychic collapse" (p. 211) that he underwent in 1844. The emotional costs of his injury also manifested themselves in a strand of unforgiving ferocity in his reviews and controversial writings. Known to be socially adept and charming, and constantly open to new ideas and schools of thought, James nevertheless defended his philosophical positions and attacked opposing ones with a deadly edge, finding in polemicism a way not only to advance his shifting and evolving views but also to exorcise internal demons.

James's acumen in intellectual controversy was nurtured during

the 1830s and 1840s, a period of strife-filled but vitally productive theological ferment in America Trained at Princeton Seminary, the bastion of the Old Light Calvinism that was under attack from both the evangelical and liberal camps, James gravitated to the most rigorously conservative articulations of Calvinism available, those of Robert Sandeman (1718–1771) and John Walker (1768–1833) Both advocated extreme versions of the doctrine of salvation by absolute grace and advanced radically anticlerical positions, finding in any arrangements conducive to clerical authority a sign of the hypocritical corruption of the Christian faith Sandeman's "aggressively stripped-down version of justification by faith" (p 158) and Walker's "corrosive intelligence" and "extreme understanding of depravity" (p 181) launched James on his extraordinary theological pilgrimage, but they could not finally contain him intellectually "Every narrowness I have ever grown out of I have first hugged and hugged as if it were a blanket for eternity" (pp 201–2), James wrote in a telling moment of self-understanding

This confession came in a letter to Ralph Waldo Emerson, whose quite different intellectual premises broke James free of radical Calvinism and advanced him toward a deeper intellectual maturity In 1842 James heard Emerson lecture in New York, and he immediately began a profound but troubled apprenticeship to this "man without a handle" (p 202) While James remained skeptical of Emerson's failure to acknowledge the reality of evil, he was nevertheless fundamentally changed by Emerson's ideas and his elusive promise of some deeper friendship The concentrated force of James's embrace of radical Calvinism was taken up into the utopian sweep of Emerson's Transcendentalism, and James emerged in the late 1840s and 1850s as one of the nation's most prominent progressive radicals, associating himself with both the Fourierist vision of "the historic social progress of the human race as a whole" (p 250) and the even more controversial "Fourierism" of marital reform and sexual liberty In this arena James's impeccable credentials as a devoted husband and father gave him wider authority as a critic of the institution of marriage in Victorian culture

Throughout the late 1840s and 1850s James continued to widen his intellectual circles both in America and Europe, but he never seemed to find his appropriate milieu until he joined Newport's "well-heeled radicals" in 1858, "settling into a life of comfortably gregarious alienation" (p 404) and eventually finding a secure place in the intellectual life of Boston and Cambridge in the 1860s He was, James Russell Lowell believed, "'the best talker in America,'" for in

Boston his "intemperance and extremism often came out looking like a special sort of wit" (p. 452). James's final philosophical position was an amalgam of radical individualism and communitarianism, grounded in a concept of a God who must diffuse himself into others in order to achieve self-existence. While his philosophical influence has been at best narrow, he achieved one of the more original syntheses of theology and political critique in nineteenth-century America. Perhaps as important, his traversal of Old Light Calvinism, Transcendentalism, Swedenborgianism, and Fourierism is something of a representative history of his age.

Throughout the narrative Habegger keeps an eye on the development of William and Henry, Jr., reminding us that the elder James's primary commitment was to the role of "father." There are odd inconsistencies in James's treatment of his children, and Habegger suggests his partiality for his oldest son, William, and his comparative neglect of the younger boys, Wilkie and Bob. William's vocational indecisiveness and late maturity, and Henry's wary defense of his privacy and his attraction to fiction (a genre outside his father's range of concerns), are in part the result of their negotiations with their fiercely determined and enormously protective father. Theirs was less a struggle against him than an effort to come to some independent vantage from which they could recognize and assess his significance beyond the circle of the family in which they knew him. This challenge, never entirely completed, infused itself into much of their work, and it kept their father's legacy obliquely alive. As Habegger's title implies, James's achievement cannot be separated from that of his sons, even though he embodied the beliefs and values of a century that they were deeply engaged in questioning and repudiating.

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KIM TOWNSEND, *Manhood at Harvard: William James and Others*. New York: W. W. Norton, 1996. Pp. 318. $29.95.

At the center of Kim Townsend's study of Harvard "manliness" in the late nineteenth century stands a less familiar William James, not the well-known philosopher of buoyant existential engagement but a darker spirit, shadowed by neurasthenia, riven by ambivalence toward self and family, tortured by the specter of the madness that comes from masturbation. The textual sanction for this

interpretation is what Townsend calls "one of James' own modest—and startling—accounts of himself," a passage somewhat confusingly mixing direct and indirect quotation "He was, he said, like a dark planet, 'believed to be greater than all the shining ones, because of the many correspondences with the illustrious, all treating him with deference,' but in fact saying nothing all the while—'having the wit to suppress his answers'" (p 26) William James as "dark planet" then becomes the central symbol in the book, Townsend's argument being that "the darkness on which he looked out—and which he contained" impelled James to formulate an ideal of manliness at Harvard that would draw a generation of young men into its orbit (p 43), a vast gravitational pull from which modern Americans still have not escaped "even as we seek ways to diminish its influence" (p 286)

The great problem with this hypothesis is that James, in speaking about a "dark planet," was not talking about himself He was talking, as it happens, about Charles Eliot Norton, the Harvard professor whose ostensible stress on an effete "gentlemanliness" Townsend then repeatedly contrasts to the more vigorous manly ideal he wants to associate with James The ease with which such a mistake can be made may suggest just how unfamiliar to us the late-nineteenth-century world of Cambridge and Boston has become, that intricate system of generational ties and social and intellectual relations that Norton and James knew as by instinct but that, at the distance of nearly a century, has become impenetrable to any merely casual gaze In this case, the occasion of Townsend's mishap was in trusting to a rather hoary digest of second-hand citations by Charles Herrick Compton entitled *William James, Philosopher and Man Quotations and References in 652 Books* (1957), and in assuming that "dark planet" in a sentence excerpted from the letters of Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr , and Sir Frederick Pollock must refer to James himself (*Holmes-Pollock Letters The Correspondence of Mr Justice Holmes and Sir Frederick Pollock, 1874–1932*, ed Mark De Wolfe Howe [1941])

Such mishaps occur most frequently, one suspects, when an author cannot quite bear to expose a cherished thesis to the revision demanded by conflicting evidence This is why, no doubt, Townsend, elsewhere a sensitive and intelligent reader of the texts he discusses, does not allow himself to be deterred by the unlikely note of grandiose immodesty in William James's imagining that he will be regarded in future as "greater than all the shining ones " The notion of James as "dark planet" is simply too serviceable to the hypothesis about masturbation and compensatory "manliness" to be abandoned The same

pattern is evident throughout *Manhood at Harvard*, as when, a bit later, the author is moved to acknowledge that it "comes as something of a surprise" to have James, in the Gifford lecture entitled "The Value of Saintliness," praise what he calls a "manlier indifference, the paying our way by what we are or do and not by what we have, the right to fling away our life at any moment irresponsibly."

I will say in a moment what Townsend makes of this quotation, but it is important to see at the outset that James is here marshaling several ideals—the voluntary poverty of monastic existence, an older doctrine of Stoic *apatheia*, or unimpassioned self-dependence, and, finally, classical-republican *virtus* or martial citizenship—against what he increasingly regarded as the spiritual emptiness of late-Victorian civilization. The most important of these, perhaps, is classical republicanism, with its ancient ideal of the citizen-soldier—Athens and Sparta and the early Roman republic, Marathon and Thermopylae and Horatio at the bridge—as a male who enjoys full civic rights because he alone goes to war ready to die in defense of the community. This is the tradition looming massively in the background when James, delivering the Gifford lectures in Edinburgh, praises a "manlier indifference"—"manliness" being, as Bernard de Mandeville had pointed out in the earlier eighteenth century, the single best English word for translating what the Romans meant by *virtus*.

The one thing James is not doing, in going on about manly indifference and flinging away one's life, is talking about Harvard College. Yet for Townsend, to whom no wider horizon of explanation is visible, there is no choice but to take "manlier indifference" as somehow being about Harvard students. (The undergraduate whom James is implicitly describing to his Edinburgh audience, says Townsend, "is not unduly competitive, he does not really care if his team wins or not.") Thus does James's Edinburgh lecture become, on Townsend's reading, a monument of "the elitist culture of the institution that James typified" and what "everyone at the time recognized as quintessentially Harvard" (p. 41). But James's listeners in Edinburgh cared very little about Harvard athletics. Their minds, as James praised "the right to fling away our life at any moment," would have been elsewhere, on *virtus* and Stoicism and classical republican liberty, on the death of Cato and Seneca's noble suicide.

Manhood at Harvard is at its best when, not attempting to deal with the wider horizon of American and European thought, it is content simply to focus on Harvard itself. The decisive Harvard presidency of Charles W. Eliot from 1869 to 1909 sets the frame for

Townsend's story, and within it he is able to offer five engaging chapters on the tensions over "manliness" within the James family, on the educational transformation of Harvard under President Eliot, on William James as a teacher of men, and on the "blindness" that Harvard manhood enforced toward various non-manly Others, leading to an imperfect realization of the Harvard ideal in the Rough Riders of Teddy Roosevelt and the cowboys of Owen Wister. A very nice touch is Townsend's decision to read the *Harvard Graduates' Magazine* as Harvard's internal conversation with itself, and his generous quotations from it do much toward reconstituting that vanished world of amateur theatricals and Alpine tours, mind cures and missionary imperialism Eliot's revolutionary "elective" system, the struggle to control collegiate athletics, the Byzantine complexities of Harvard's club system—all this and a great deal more comes vividly to life in the pages of *Manhood at Harvard*

Yet Townsend's error about the "dark planet" symbolism, or his relative obliviousness to the broader currents of late-Victorian thought, are not mere incidental vagaries in an otherwise entertaining and informative study For these are related to a deeper problem, the constant tendency of *Manhood at Harvard* to pass judgment on the world of William James from the viewpoint of our own "enlightened" opinions about such matters as gender, sexuality, and social class Townsend is aware of this danger—"The point is not to feel superior to James at this (or any other) moment," he avers at one point (p 200)—but this awareness does not then prevent him from arguing that James developed the Harvard manly ideal to overcome his own fears of masturbatory madness and sexual inadequacy Having developed the ideal "for his own survival and well-being," James can then later be shown to have been "held back by the masculinity he perfected" (p 194) Insufficiently enthusiastic about coeducation, imperfectly sympathetic to the newer immigrants, unaccountably loyal to an ideal of manhood associated with military valor, James finally emerges as a sort of visionary blind man, "pointing the way to more openness of mind and spirit than he could ever reach" (p. 194).

The reason that "manliness" reappears with extraordinary force and frequency in both late-nineteenth-century Britain and America is not because one Harvard philosopher was guilty about masturbation but because "manliness," along with such associated concepts as "luxury," "corruption," "effeminacy," and "ruin," had been revived in both nations as a vocabulary of civic alarm, invoked as urgently by English "Muscular Christians" against the Tractarians in the 1850s as by the American Populists against Wall Street bankers in the 1890s If

William James seems to preside over the birth of manhood at Harvard, it is not because a new manly ideal somehow suddenly "came into being in the decades following the Civil War" (p. 11). The renewed and unexpected relevance of an ancient warrior ideal—of, in a phrase from James that Townsend quotes in another connection, "a type of military character which every one feels that the race should never cease to breed" (p. 245)—is perceived at Harvard and elsewhere only because an ancient constellation of classical republican ideas, of *virtus* and *apatheia*, effeminacy and corruption, has once again risen above the horizon. This is the sense in which *Manhood at Harvard*, for all its liveliness of speculation, leaves us where we are left by so much recent work in literary and cultural studies, gazing uncomprehendingly into a past whose pastness still eludes us.

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JONATHAN SMITH, *Fact and Feeling: Baconian Science and the Nineteenth-Century Literary Imagination*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1994. Pp. x + 277. $52 cloth, $22.95 paper.

Francis Bacon enjoyed a considerable vogue in nineteenth-century England, inspiring several major editions of his works, numerous biographical studies, and yet more numerous controversies about his reputation, both intellectual and moral. His historical prominence made him an obvious early choice for the English Men of Letters series and a weighty rhetorical support for various philosophical positions, especially those staked out over the role and authority of science during the period. Jonathan Smith's *Fact and Feeling* (the latest contribution to Wisconsin's "Science and Literature" series, edited by George Levine) enlarges our understanding of Bacon's significance by demonstrating that the nineteenth-century shift of authority from Baconian induction to the hypothetico-deductive method can be understood as part of a wider debate over defining objectivity and the proper uses of the creative imagination in both scientific and literary thought. Among the strengths of Smith's study are his ability to tease out the rhetorical contradictions of this debate and to re-create the common philosophical concerns that linked a surprisingly wide range of scientific and aesthetic theorizing during this period. He may go too far in claiming that "we don't need to read Bacon (or Newton) to talk about what the nineteenth century thought

of him" (p. 14), but he does a good job of illustrating what was at stake in Romantic and Victorian (mis)readings of both men.

After an introduction that traces the ways both Bacon and Newton were reinvented during the course of the century to accommodate or to defend the growing prestige of hypothesis in scientific methodology, each successive chapter puts a particular scientist or theory into philosophical conversation with a particular writer or literary work and illustrates how their respective attempts to define the role of imagination/hypothesis and induction/empiricism were linked to deeper rivalries over intellectual authority. Thus, Wordsworth and Coleridge are placed into interesting juxtaposition with Humphry Davy, sharing an appreciation for the creative imagination even as each wished to appropriate its highest uses for his own professional endeavors. Chapter 3 develops a convincing analogy between naive induction and catastrophist theories of geological change, and it then goes on to illustrate how the imaginative re-creation of past events was crucial to the uniformitarian hypotheses championed instead by Charles Lyell and Charles Darwin. Somewhat less successful is the chapter on George Eliot's *The Mill on the Floss*, which argues that the novel's culminating flood is not the catastrophist event most readers have found it to be but is in fact portrayed by George Eliot as part of uniformitarian processes of change. George Eliot's relationship to nineteenth-century science is well-traveled ground, and Smith's efforts to map the specifics of Lyellian theory onto her thinking about progress and change yield mostly qualifications of earlier interpretations.

Although hardly more successful in defending Ruskin as a scientific thinker (in any but Ruskin's own definitions of the term), the next chapter does provide valuable insight into Ruskin's theorizing about perception and imagination by exploring the parallels between his opposition to mindless realism and false idealizing in art and his critique of materialism and speculation in science. As Smith demonstrates, at stake in Ruskin's controversies with John Tyndall was the right to define the proper uses of the "scientific imagination" that Tyndall so publicly championed. Smith's discussion of Edwin Abbott's *Flatland* analyzes its relationship to Victorian controversies over non-Euclidean geometries, controversies in which imagination was aligned with religious truth and Kantian idealism, and fact was aligned with logical and empirical evidence. Smith argues that despite Abbott's reputation as a liberal thinker, his position in this debate was a relatively conservative one that defended the idealist legitimacy of geometric form against the radical relativism of the non-Euclideans. The last chapter offers a final example of how empiricism was tempered

by imagination in Victorian thought by classifying the Baconian and hypothetico-deductive elements in the methods of Sherlock Holmes. The connections that Smith draws between Holmes and scientists like Huxley and Tyndall are more convincing than those he sees with aesthetes like Wilde. Wilde and Holmes may both advocate the impersonality of art and scorn pedestrian realism, but the wholesale imaginative transformation of fact that Wilde advocates in "The Decay of Lying" is scarcely consistent with Holmes's positivism. The work of Walter Pater, even more significant to the later-Victorian debate over perception and objectivity, seems a puzzling omission at the end of this kind of study.

Notwithstanding Smith's attempts to show the common ground occupied by both sides in each chapter, a kind of false dichotomizing strains his entire discussion. This is ironic, since his express purpose is to break down distinctions between imagination and empiricism, subjectivity and objectivity, and to demonstrate that these binaries were simplistic even in Victorian thought. Smith claims that his own use of such oppositions is merely "heuristic" (p. 236), a convenient structuring device for his argument, but his heavy reliance on them and on the "tensions" he repeatedly sets up between them can wind up reifying the very distinctions he is trying to break down. Also marginalized by this kind of argumentative framework is an adequate sense of the way that ideological pressures such as the scientists' struggle for professionalization may have inflected their claims about their work, as well as a sense of the role played by specific texts like *The Origin of Species* in influencing the prestige of hypothesis during the century. *Fact and Feeling* succeeds admirably in tracing the thread of a crucial debate through the fabric of nineteenth-century thought, but it never quite forges fact and imagination into the unified whole that it champions.

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Books Briefly Noted

BERG, MAGGIE "*Wuthering Heights*" *The Writing in the Margin* Twayne's Masterwork Studies Series, no 163 New York Twayne Publishers, 1996 Pp xiv + 136 $23 95 cloth, $13 95 paper

Emily Brontë's novel, according to this feminist reading, "offers a striking demonstration of how patriarchal ideology can issue in the abuse of women and children, and, more importantly, it demonstrates women's creative ways of resisting oppression "

CARON, JAMES E , and M THOMAS INGE, eds *Sut Lovingood's Nat'ral Born Yarnspinner Essays on George Washington Harris* Tuscaloosa University of Alabama Press, 1996 Pp xiv + 330 $44 95

This handsome compilation is the first collection of critical commentary and new scholarship to be published on the East Tennessee, antebellum comic writer (1814–1869) While some of the commentary is from the nineteenth century, there is an even more generous selection of recent criticism, including six "new perspectives" provided for this occasion by Hershel Parker, Sheldon Armitage, Pascal Covici, Jr , Nancy A Walker, James E Caron, and Sanford Pinsker, and a new bibliography by M Thomas Inge

CARLSON, ERIC W , ed *A Companion to Poe Studies* Westport, Conn Greenwood Press, 1996 Pp xvi + 604 $99 50

This reference companion, the third in a series with others on Melville (1986) and Henry James (1993), is a valuable guide to the scholarship and criticism that the enormous interest in Poe's life and work has generated, especially during the last fifty years Consisting of some twenty-five chapters written by prominent Poe scholars and critics, the volume is divided into five parts, the first of which discusses the difficult problems confronting Poe's biographers The second section primarily offers textual criticism of his individual works, while the third and fourth sections treat broad topics related to his philosophical views and aesthetic theory The fifth section consists of chapters on the legacy of Poe as a world author and his lasting influence on literature, popular culture, and fine arts

CASSIDY, FREDERIC G , chief ed *Dictionary of American Regional English, Volume 3 I-O* Associate editor Joan Houston Hall Cambridge, Mass Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1996 Pp xvi + 927 $75

Built upon an unprecedented survey of spoken English across the United States and bolstered by extensive historical research, this magnificent compilation is of inestimable value to students of American culture, a testimony to the great diversity and seemingly infinite linguistic capacity of the human imagination It is also, as we said of the earlier volumes, immensely fun

CRAWFORD, WALTER B., with ANN M. CRAWFORD. *Samuel Taylor Coleridge: An Annotated Bibliography of Criticism and Scholarship, Volume III.* New York: G. K. Hall, 1996. Pp. xxxvi + 946. $90.

This volume not only supplements the bibliographical material found in the first two volumes of this series but also adds a new section that includes non-traditional references from Coleridge-related visual art, music, films, television and radio broadcasts, and electronic media, as well as other literary works. The annotations and the several indexes (comprising altogether some 275 pages) are magisterial and promise to be of great value to users of this compilation. The one regret is that all this material is not more conveniently available in an electronic text.

EDGECOMBE, RODNEY STENNING. *Two Poets of the Oxford Movement: John Keble and John Henry Newman.* Cranbury, N.J.: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press and Associated University Presses, 1996. Pp. 296. $42.50.

After a brief introduction in which he discusses the nature of Tractarian poetry, the author of this study provides detailed readings of Newman's *Lyra Apostolica* and Keble's *Christian Year*, stressing their value as poetry rather than as theological documents. He argues that both men possessed genuine lyric gifts, which shifts in taste and the theological emphasis of earlier commentaries have tended to obscure.

ELIOT, GEORGE. *George Eliot's "Daniel Deronda" Notebooks.* Edited by Jane Irwin. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996. Pp. xlii + 524. $94.95.

One of these four notebooks in which George Eliot recorded memoranda of her reading while she was preparing for and writing *Daniel Deronda* is here published for the first time; the texts of the others are based upon new transcriptions. Arranged for the convenience of the reader, the material is organized according to content—by subject matter or by the author of George Eliot's source material—rather than according to the physical layout of the manuscript books.

FIELD, KATE. *Selected Letters.* Edited by Carolyn J. Moss. Carbondale and Edwardsville: Southern Illinois University Press, 1996. Pp. xxxii + 255. $49.95.

A generous selection of the letters written by the American journalist, author, lecturer, actress, and owner-editor of the weekly newspaper *Kate Field's Washington* (1890–1895).

GASKELL, ELIZABETH, and SOPHIA HOLLAND. *Private Voices: The Diaries of Elizabeth Gaskell and Sophia Holland.* Edited by J. A. V. Chapple and Anita Wilson. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1996. Pp. 125. $35.

These two diaries—one by Gaskell, the other by her cousin Sophia Holland—provide us with uniquely personal and revealing accounts of Victorian womanhood and motherhood. They record the first few years of life of Gaskell's daughter Marianne and of Sophia's son, Edward Thurstan. This is the first critical edition of the Gaskell diary, previously published in a limited edition of only fifty copies in 1923, and the first-ever publication of the Holland diary.

GONDA, CAROLINE. *Reading Daughters' Fictions, 1709–1834: Novels and Society from Manley to Edgeworth*. Cambridge Studies in Romanticism Series, no. 19. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996. Pp. xx + 287. $54.95.

In spite of what the keepers of public morals might have said about the dangers of novel reading, this engaging study, through its careful examination of novels and nonliterary materials from the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, argues that popular fiction helped to maintain rather than undermine familial and social order.

GUY, JOSEPHINE M. *The Victorian Social-Problem Novel: The Market, the Individual, and Communal Life*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1996. Pp. x + 238. $45 cloth, $14.99 paper.

By focusing on the intellectual context in which such novels as *Hard Times*, *Mary Barton*, *North and South*, *Sybil*, *Alton Locke*, and *Felix Holt* were produced—on the Victorians' debates about "the social" and their understanding of what was meant by a "social problem"—the author of this critical history provides a valuable paradigm for understanding the value and continuing appeal of these works.

HARDING, ELLEN, ed. *Re-Framing the Pre-Raphaelites: Historical and Theoretical Essays*. Brookfield, Vt.: Scolar Press, 1996. Pp. xiv + 287. $76.95.

Several of these fourteen essays are case studies of well-known visual and literary works by founding members of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood; others explore meanings generated by Pre-Raphaelite works on specific themes and define the cultural work done by them. There are essays on John Everett Millais, William Holman Hunt, Dante Gabriel Rossetti, Ford Madox Brown, Joanna Boyce, and Edward Burne-Jones, as well as other artists associated with the movement. Among the subjects discussed are gender, class, ethnicity, national and regional identity, patronage, the position of the woman artist, the nude, images of women, and the Victorian cult of death.

HARTE, BRET. *Selected Letters of Bret Harte*. Edited by Gary Scharnhorst. Literature of the American West Series. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1997. Pp. xvi + 464. $34.95.

Of the more than two thousand known Harte letters, Scharnhorst has selected 259 (half of which were previously unpublished) for this impressive selection. The introduction and annotations are succinct but thoroughly informative and helpful in providing the reader with the necessary literary and historical contexts for understanding these important documents. It should be noted that the editor has wisely decided to include all the known letters written by Harte to Mark Twain, a decision that adds significantly to the value of this edition.

HAWTHORNE, NATHANIEL. *A Wonder Book for Girls and Boys*. The Iona and Peter Opie Library of Children's Literature Series. New York: Oxford University Press, 1996. Pp. 254. $21.95.

Neither the introduction by Ola D'Aulaire nor the afterword by Joel Pfister will be of much interest to Hawthorne scholars and critics, and the Houghton Mifflin 1893 plates photographically reproduced in the printing of this book have no textual authority, only the charm of Walter Crane's illustrations. But it is a handsome book, designed to reach the audience for whom it was originally intended.

HOGAN, ROBERT, et al., eds. *Dictionary of Irish Literature. Revised and Expanded Edition*. 2 Volumes. Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1996. Pp. xxii + 1,413. $135.

This second edition is a revised and considerably expanded update of the original one-volume work published in 1978. Through some twelve hundred entries written by 116 contributors, the work provides biographical facts, critical interpretation, and extensive bibliographical information for all significant Irish writers, past and present. Included are more than twice as many entries as in the first edition, along with current bibliographical material for all authors. Many of the new entries discuss writers who have emerged during the last fifteen years, but a substantial number of entries cover earlier authors who were omitted from the first edition. The nineteenth century is especially well represented. Introductory material discusses the principal themes of Irish writing and the history of Irish literature, and a chronology provides a literary and historical time frame for the work.

JONES, ALED. *Powers of the Press: Newspapers, Power, and the Public in Nineteenth-Century England*. Brookfield, Vt.: Scolar Press, 1996. Pp. xii + 231. $74.95.

Considers the ways in which individuals, political organizations, and the state sought to understand the leading mass-communication medium of the nineteenth century and to use it to influence public opinion and effect moral and social reform.

KESSLER, DONNA J. *The Making of Sacagawea: A Euro-American Legend*. Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1996. Pp. xii + 258. $29.95.

The legend of the Shoshone woman encountered by Lewis and Clark has struck a responsive chord with American readers for nearly two centuries, yet like all myths her story reveals more about the dominant culture that maintains its meaning than it tells about the original historical engagement. Examining both nineteenth- and twentieth-century texts, the author of this study reveals in interesting ways how since its beginnings the Sacagawea myth has reflected the conflicted representation of Native Americans as both savage and noble, as the aboriginal "other" and the American hero.

KNIGHT, FRANCES. *The Nineteenth-Century Church and English Society.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995. Pp. xiv + 230. $54.95.

This well-researched study will be of considerable interest to those who desire to understand better the meaning of Anglicanism in the lives and thinking of ordinary Englishmen during the Victorian period.

MEYERS, TERRY L. *The Sexual Tensions of William Sharp: A Study of the Birth of Fiona Macleod, Incorporating Two Lost Works, "Ariadne in Naxos" and "Beatrice."* Studies in Nineteenth-Century British Literature Series, vol. 2. New York: Peter Lang, 1996. Pp. vi + 126. $37.95.

Printed here for the first time are two works by the nineteenth-century Scottish writer (1855–1905) that illuminate important dimensions of Victorian constructions on gender and sexuality and that add considerably to our understanding of the complex personality of this writer, who, as the female Fiona Macleod, wrote mystic Celtic tales and romances admired by Yeats and others. The first work is a play stimulated by Swinburne's *Atalanta in Calydon*, the second is a poem in the idyllic mode popularized by Tennyson.

MONTEIRO, GEORGE. *The Presence of Camões: Influences on the Literature of England, America, and Southern Africa.* Studies in Romance Languages Series, vol. 40. Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1996. Pp. x + 189. $21.95.

Combining textual analysis with cultural investigation, this exploration of the influence of the sixteenth-century Portuguese poet on literature throughout the English-speaking world presents a closely focused, comprehensive intertextual study of Camões and English-language writers, such as Elizabeth Barrett Browning, Poe, Longfellow, Melville, and Dickinson, whose vision and expression have been sharpened by their varied responses to Camões's poetry.

NELSON, CAROLYN CHRISTENSEN. *British Women Fiction Writers of the 1890s.* Twayne's English Authors Series, no. 533. New York: Twayne Publishers, 1996. Pp. xii + 115. $24.95.

The author of this informative survey chronicles the historical, literary, and social forces affecting both well-known and less-known women writers at the end of the nineteenth century, including Sarah Grand, George Egerton (Mary Chavelita Donne), Vernon Lee, Ella D'Arcy, Ada Leverson, Mona Caird, Mary Cholmondeley, Ella Hepworth Dixon, and Mabel Emily Wotton.

NEWLIN, GEORGE, ed. *Every Thing in Dickens: Ideas and Subjects Discussed by Charles Dickens in His Complete Works. A Topicon.* Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1996. Pp. lx + 1,102. $145.

The fourth volume of Newlin's *Windows into® Dickens* (the first three described in an earlier "Books Briefly Noted" were titled *Everyone in Dickens*), this compendium of the novelist's views and opinions on a great variety of ideas and subjects (including a lengthy index of familiar words and phrases) takes a little time and patience on the reader's part to learn to use effectively, but once its design and method of execution are understood it will prove to be a useful tool for recovery and discovery of the world of Dickens.

PRICE, JODY. *"A Map with Utopia": Oscar Wilde's Theory for Social Transformation.* American University Studies, Series IV: English Language and Literature, vol. 162. New York: Peter Lang, 1996. Pp. x + 249. $44.95.

Portrays Wilde as a determined social activist who attempted throughout his literary life to define a theory for social change that would create a society free of intolerance and inequality.

RAVEN, JAMES, HELEN SMALL, and NAOMI TADMOR, eds. *The Practice and Representation of Reading in England.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996. Pp. xviii + 313. $54.95.

Two of these fourteen essays—most of which were first delivered at a conference sponsored by the Cambridge Project for the Book, held at Magdalene College, Cambridge, in March 1992—will be of special interest to readers of *NCL*: Kate Flint's "Women, Men and the Reading of *Vanity Fair*" and Helen Small's "A Pulse of 124: Charles Dickens and a Pathology of the Mid-Victorian Reading Public."

REDFIELD, MARC. *Phantom Formations: Aesthetic Ideology and the "Bildungsroman."* Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1996. Pp. xvi + 220. $35.

George Eliot's *Daniel Deronda* and *Middlemarch* are among the texts considered in this impressively argued and revealing study whose central argument is that "the notion of the *Bildungsroman* brings into sharp focus the promises and pitfalls of aesthetics, and that aesthetics in turn exemplifies what we call ideology."

RICHARDSON, ALAN, and SONIA HOFKOSH, eds *Romanticism, Race, and Imperial Culture, 1780–1834* Bloomington and Indianapolis Indiana University Press, 1996 Pp x + 352 $39 95

These thirteen original essays reexamine a wide selection of romantic-era writers, texts, and genres in order to explore the relation between romanticism as a literary field and the emergence of the second British Empire during the formative period from 1780 to 1834 Extending feminist and historicist inquiry with the insights of postcolonial critique, these essays consider some of the pivotal concepts that have informed romantic studies, from the largely unanalyzed construction of race as a category of European political and literary culture to how the notion of the solitary imagination functions in capitalism's imperialist enterprise Among the contributors are Moira Ferguson, Nancy Moore Goslee, Balachandra Rajan, and Anne K Mellor (a member of the advisory board of *NCL*)

ROOSEVELT, THEODORE, and BRANDER MATTHEWS *The Letters of Theodore Roosevelt and Brander Matthews* Edited by Lawrence J Oliver Knoxville University of Tennessee Press, 1995 Pp xxxii + 240 $27

Intelligence, learning, and literary understanding may not make a better president, but they do make a more interesting one This finely edited correspondence between the professor of dramatic literature at Columbia University and the progressive politician serves as a worthy companion volume to Oliver's earlier *Brander Matthews, Theodore Roosevelt, and the Politics of American Literature, 1880–1920* (1992), also published by the University of Tennessee Press

RUDY, JOHN G *Wordsworth and the Zen Mind The Poetry of Self-Emptying* Albany State University of New York Press, 1996 Pp xvi + 268 $59 50 cloth, $19 95 paper

This book claims that Zen thought and art provide both a generative and a formative context for understanding the spirituality of Wordsworth Combining methods of modern literary scholarship with the philosophical initiatives of the Kyoto School, the text crosses disciplines as well as cultures, offering a non-monotheistic, non-pantheistic philosophical ground upon which to study what Wordsworth calls the "tranquil soul" and "the one Presence" that underlies "the great whole of life "

SANDNER, DAVID *The Fantastic Sublime Romanticism and Transcendence in Nineteenth-Century Children's Fantasy Literature* Contributions to the Study of Science Fiction and Fantasy Series, no 69 Westport, Conn Greenwood Press, 1996 Pp viii + 160 $49 95

In contrast to the traditional moral tales of the eighteenth century, which were written with the purpose of instructing children on how to become adults, the fantasy stories for children that emerged during the nineteenth century reveled in the imagination and the enjoyment of reading This, in turn, affected the ways in which adults came to regard fantasy literature, including the familiar works of such writers as Kenneth Grahame, George MacDonald, and Christina Rossetti

SCHOENFIELD, MARK *The Professional Wordsworth Law, Labor, and the Poet's Contract* Athens University of Georgia Press, 1996 Pp xvi + 360 $50

Focusing primarily on *Lyrical Ballads* and *The Excursion*, this study explores how Wordsworth's engagement with legal discourse and institutions shaped his poetry, his sense of professionalism, and the literary environment of his day It is the author's contention that Wordsworth's intellectual involvement in legal thought was instrumental in shaping his concepts of the poetic mind and market and in his composition of particular poems

SMITH, GEDDETH *Thomas Abthorpe Cooper America's Premier Tragedian* Cranbury, NJ Fairleigh Dickinson University Press and Associated University Presses, 1996 Pp xviii + 362 $52 50

A well-researched biography of the British-born actor (1776–1849) who in the decades before the greater successes of Junius Brutus Booth and Edwin Forrest was regarded as the leading American tragedian

TRAILL, CATHARINE PARR *I Bless You in My Heart Selected Correspondence of Catharine Parr Traill* Edited by Carl Ballstadt, Elizabeth Hopkins, and Michael A Peterman Toronto University of Toronto Press, 1996 Pp xxii + 437 $39 95

Chosen from her nearly five hundred extant letters spanning seventy years the 136 presented here vividly reflect typical aspects of social and family life in nineteenth-century Canada, attachments to the Old World, health and medical conditions, travel, religious faith and practice the stresses of settlement in Upper Canada, and the dispersal of families with the opening up of the Canadian and American West

TRAUBEL, HORACE *With Walt Whitman in Camden, Volumes 8 and 9* Edited by Jeanne Chapman and Robert MacIsaac Oregon House, Calif W L Bentley, 1996 Vol 8, February 11, 1891–September 30, 1891 pp xii + 624 Vol 9, October 1, 1891–April 3, 1892 pp xxiv + 652 $99 50

The first installment of this detailed account of the daily conversations Traubel had with Walt Whitman during the years 1888 to 1892 appeared in 1906 These two volumes finally complete the series, in a fashion entirely worthy of what was then, and still is now, a monumental undertaking Provides a wealth of information regarding Whitman's political and literary opinions during the final years of his life and, in the many transcripts of letters from friends and admirers, some sense of Whitman's stature in the literary world about which he cared so intensely

TYDEMAN, WILLIAM, and STEVEN PRICE *Wilde Salome* Plays in Production Series Cambridge Cambridge University Press, 1996 Pp xii + 214 $54 95 cloth, $17 95 paper

Beginning with Sarah Bernhardt's aborted production of 1892 and other early stage realizations, this study provides a detailed history of Wilde's controversial work, its impact on the English stage between 1911 and 1990, and its transformation into opera, dance, and film

VANN, J DON, and ROSEMARY T VANARSDEL, eds *Periodicals of Queen Victoria's Empire An Exploration* Toronto University of Toronto Press, 1996 Pp x + 371 $80

This remarkably useful and needed volume contains six essays that investigate the role that periodical publications played in the culture of Britain's colonies during the period up to 1900 In chapters devoted to periodical publishing in Australia, Canada, India, New Zealand, Southern Africa, and the "outposts" of the Empire (Ceylon, Cyprus, Hong Kong, Malaya and Singapore, Malta, and the West Indies), the contributors also consider the function and importance of periodicals in colonial life They identify and describe all locally produced publications that appeared at weekly or longer intervals and that contained, for example, local news, poetry, fiction, criticism, commentary on the arts, news from home, shipping information, and commodities reports

Contributors to this Issue

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"Have You Read...?": Real Readers and Their Responses in Antebellum Boston and Its Region

RONALD J. ZBORAY
AND MARY SARACINO ZBORAY

THE reader has been an important focus for some recent literary historians. Most of these writers, in varying ways, have attempted to construct an image of the reader from the text itself. In doing so they call upon an almost dizzying variety of approaches including anthropology, phenomenology, structuralism, post-structuralism, deconstruction, and postmodernism, but not, usually, traditional historical methods.[1] To some degree, literary criticism's challenge that history is as liable as other disciplines to pro-

[1] For recent developments within literary studies concerning readers and a "return to history in criticism," see James L. Machor, "Introduction: Readers/Texts/Contexts," in *Readers in History: Nineteenth-Century American Literature and the Contexts of Response*, ed. Machor (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1993), pp. vii–xxix; Steven Mailloux, *Interpretive Conventions: The Reader in the Study of American Fiction* (Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press, 1982); Jane P. Tompkins, "An Introduction to Reader-Response Criticism," and "The Reader in History: The Changing Shape of Literary Response," both in *Reader-Response Criticism: From Formalism to Post-Structuralism*, ed. Tompkins (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1980), pp. ix–xxvi and 201–32; Susan R. Suleiman, "Introduction: Varieties of Audience-Oriented Criticism," in *The Reader in the Text: Essays on Audience and Interpretation*, ed. Suleiman and Inge Crosman (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1980), pp. 3–45; Cathy N. Davidson, "Toward a History of Books and Readers," in *Reading in America: Literature and Social History*, ed. Davidson (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1989), pp. 1–26; and Davidson, *Revolution and the Word: The Rise of the Novel in America* (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1986), pp. 3–14.

duce a fictive image of the past has discouraged inquiries into documents beyond literary texts.[2] Reviewing the body of reader-response criticism and even the so-called new historicism, James L. Machor notes this "lack of sustained inquiry into the experience of reading as a historically grounded dynamic."[3] Still, a few researchers, such as Nina Baym, Barbara Sicherman, and James Smith Allen, have tried to identify readers through historical documents and manuscript sources.[4]

[2] The limitations of historical methodology have been pointed out by Michel Foucault, Jacques Derrida, and many other critics. For a particularly enlightening account of Foucault's and Derrida's thought on historiography and history, see Nancy Armstrong and Leonard Tennenhouse, *The Imaginary Puritan: Literature, Intellectual Labor, and the Origins of Personal Life* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: Univ. of California Press, 1992), pp. 1–8. See also Machor, "Introduction"; Hans Robert Jauss, "Literary History as a Challenge to Literary Theory," trans. Elizabeth Benzinger, *New Literary History*, 2 (1970), 7–37; Wolfgang Iser, *Prospecting: From Reader Response to Literary Anthropology* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1989); and Iser, *The Fictive and the Imaginary: Charting Literary Anthropology* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1993).

[3] "Historical Hermeneutics and Antebellum Fiction: Gender, Response Theory, and Interpretive Contexts," in *Readers in History*, p. 55. Machor's "Introduction" identifies several other writers among those who remain essentially "transhistorical" or "disappointing in terms of advancing our understanding of the textual engagement of audiences as historical phenomena" despite overtures to historicist approaches; these include Wolfgang Iser, Hans Robert Jauss, Stanley Fish, and Stephen Greenblatt (pp. viii–x). For a view of response among contemporary readers, see Janice A. Radway, *Reading the Romance: Women, Patriarchy, and Popular Literature* (Chapel Hill: Univ. of North Carolina Press, 1984).

[4] See James L. Machor, "Fiction and Informed Reading in Early Nineteenth-Century America," *Nineteenth-Century Literature*, 47 (1992), 320–48. Nina Baym, in *Novels, Readers, and Reviewers: Responses to Fiction in Antebellum America* (Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press, 1984), however, shifts the focus to another printed textual corpus, book reviews. Barbara Sicherman's concentration on a single midwestern American Gilded Age family in her "Sense and Sensibility: A Case Study of Women's Reading in Late-Victorian America," in *Reading in America*, pp. 201–25, is too narrow to permit generalization, as is her focus on one remarkable woman in "Reading and Ambition: M. Carey Thomas and Female Heroism," *American Quarterly*, 45 (1993), 73–103. James Smith Allen's sweep over a century-and-a-half of French readers rushes past short-lived changes in reading taste and practice; see his *In the Public Eye: A History of Reading in Modern France, 1800–1940* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1991), pp. 72–81 and 278–82. For considerations of reading that are not as much concerned with the elucidation of texts, see William J. Gilmore, *Reading Becomes a Necessity of Life: Material and Cultural Life in Rural New England, 1780–1835* (Knoxville: Univ. of Tennessee Press, 1989); Richard D. Brown, *Knowledge Is Power: The Diffusion of Information in Early America, 1700–1865* (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1989); and Ronald J. Zboray, *A Fictive People: Antebellum Economic Development and the American Reading Public* (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1993).

This essay aims to augment the search for real readers' responses through an in-depth analysis of about twenty manuscript collections produced by middle-class families residing in the Boston region from 1835 to 1860.[5] The families called upon for their responses to literature were from the highly literate segment of society, though not all of them were "old money," and some of them had little money at all. Most of the informants in these families are women, the wives or daughters of prominent professionals or businessmen. The women led primarily domestic lives, their days occupied with household chores, visiting, and volunteer activities. Much of the time they read—or listened to others read—while performing tasks such as sewing or cooking. Their reportage included not only other women but also the men and boys in their families and friendship circles. A few men, primarily through family correspondence, testify in their own words about reading experiences. Another characteristic of this group of informants is their geographic mobility; as such they relied upon letter writing to maintain ties as they moved within and out of New England. Avid diarists, they recorded their responses to reading among their sentiments about home, family, and distant relations, along with political and cultural events and, of course, the weather. The informants range in age from a thirteen-year-old daughter of a Boston printer, to young wives

[5] The papers of professional authors and literary critics have been excluded from this study; see Mary Kelley, *Private Woman, Public Stage: Literary Domesticity in Nineteenth-Century America* (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1984), for an excellent treatment of one segment of that group. The focus here is rather upon readers who do not make a living within the book trades. The community of readers under study is white, middle or upper class, Unitarian (rarely Universalist or liberal Episcopalian), Whig, and generally antislavery. Most scholarly attention has fallen upon the upper end of the sociological spectrum treated here; see, for example, Betty G. Farrell, *Elite Families: Class and Power in Nineteenth-Century Boston* (Albany: State Univ. of New York Press, 1993); Ronald Story, *The Forging of an Aristocracy: Harvard and the Boston Upper Class, 1800–1870* (Middletown, Conn.: Wesleyan Univ. Press, 1980); and Robert F. Dalzell Jr., *Enterprising Elite: The Boston Associates and the World They Made* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1987). For an unusual glimpse at the middle of the spectrum, see James R. McGovern, *Yankee Family* (New Orleans: Polyanthos, 1975). In this essay we make no attempts to generalize from this community outward into a larger regional or national reading public. For a delineation of the region's limits, see Francis X. Blouin Jr., *The Boston Region, 1810–1850: A Study of Urbanization* (Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press, 1978), chap. 2.

and middle-aged mothers, on to a retired Cambridge physician and his wife.[6]

In their letters and diaries these people write at times with passion and eloquence, but more often in terse phrases, about their experiences with printed matter. While such snippets do not tell the entire story of reading response, they do point out some ways that people felt about the books, pamphlets, and news items they read. By employing a "character-action approach" that recognizes that "willed human conduct is verbally constructed and guided" and that historical meaning "is embodied in the surviving cultural record such as diaries, novels, letters, autobiographies, histories and even dictionaries," we hope to add another dimension to historical reading through the use of personal papers.[7]

Rather than contest the textual analysis of reader response, we seek merely to unearth new sources for understanding it. While nineteenth-century literary texts remain outside of our scope, a scrutiny of family papers—the "texts" left by historical

[6] This essay is part of a larger, ongoing study of the experience of reading in antebellum New England, a project that has so far led us to read through material in about two hundred and fifty collections from archives throughout the region. Research for this essay was underwritten by a study grant from the Schlesinger Library (1993) and the Benjamin F. Stevens Fellowship of the Massachusetts Historical Society (1994). Due gratitude goes to the staff of those institutions and to that of the American Antiquarian Society. At AAS in 1994 we delivered a paper at its Seminar in American Bibliography and Book Trades History that included some of the material presented here. For other perspectives on a population similar to the one considered in this essay, see Ronald J. Zboray and Mary Saracino Zboray, "Political News and Female Readership in Antebellum Boston and Its Region," *Journalism History*, 22 (1996), 2–14; Zboray and Zboray, "Books, Reading, and the World of Goods in Antebellum New England," *American Quarterly*, 48 (1996), 587–622; and Zboray and Zboray, "Reading and Everyday Life in Antebellum Boston: The Diary of Daniel F. and Mary D. Child," *Libraries and Culture*, 32 (Summer 1997), 285–323.

[7] Colin Campbell, "Understanding Traditional and Modern Patterns of Consumption in Eighteenth-Century England: A Character-Action Approach," in *Consumption and the World of Goods*, ed. John Brewer and Roy Porter (London: Routledge, 1993), p. 44; see also C. Wright Mills, "Situated Actions and Vocabularies of Motive," *American Sociological Review*, 5 (1940), 904–13. Previous researchers, of course, have used family papers to study reading in history. Sicherman focuses on two collections, the Hamilton Family Papers ("Sense and Sensibility") and the M. Carey Thomas Papers ("Reading and Ambition"). Richard D. Brown, in his *Knowledge Is Power*, extensively consulted diaries and other personal papers but does not analyze reader response; see also Robert Sattelmeyer, *Thoreau's Reading: A Study in Intellectual History with Bibliographical Catalogue* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1988).

readers themselves—forms the basis of this study. But diaries and letters give a very limited glimpse into the entire range of reader response. These sources can never guide us through a reader's page-by-page experience of a text. As such, the definition of "response" in this essay remains limited by the discourse contained within the manuscripts. This discourse appears usually in the form of reactions, some of them almost formulaic, by a reader to a text, but often enough these records contain extensive accounts of literary response.[8] Despite their obvious limitations, family papers remain one source yet to be systematically explored as evidence of historical readership.

Using these family papers we investigate the different types of responses they contain. The discussion moves from most common and basic reactions (e.g., "interesting" or "amusing") to more intricate ones: the "usefulness" of a text, its "veracity," comparisons with other texts, and its emotional instrumentality (e.g., how did it make the reader feel, or how did it express the sentiment of the reader?). We conclude with an analysis of accounts of readers' engagements with specific textual passages.

In characterizing readers' responses we must ponder the influence of the modes of discourse. When readers record their reactions they do so within the conventions of diary keeping and letter writing, their own history of correspondence, and their unique relationships with their correspondents. For example, on the one hand, some letters provide a discourse in which two or more readers generate a discussion as they share their responses to texts. Letters also reveal social networks in which texts are shared; ubiquitous in letters is the phrase "Have you read ____?"—an invitation to a shared textual ground. Diaries, on the other hand, at times but not always, allow for more private and self-reflective responses.[9]

[8] Wolfgang Iser defines response in relation to "the response-inviting structures of the text" (*Prospecting*, p. 50).

[9] On the use and limitations of personal papers, see Marilyn Ferris Motz, *True Sisterhood: Michigan Women and Their Kin, 1820–1920* (Albany: State Univ. of New York Press, 1983), pp. 2–14 and 53–81; Jane H. Hunter, "Inscribing the Self in the Heart of the Family: Diaries and Girlhood in Late-Victorian America," *American Quarterly*, 44 (1992), 51–81; Ellen K. Rothman, *Hands and Hearts: A History of Courtship in America* (New York: Basic Books, 1984), pp. 5–13; and Elizabeth Hampsten, *Read This Only to Yourself: The Private Writings of Midwestern Women, 1880–1910* (Bloomington: Indiana Univ. Press, 1982), pp. vii–xii.

In both the letters and diaries considered here, the universe of reading matter extends well beyond what is conventionally deemed "literary." These readers, like other antebellum Americans, consumed a wide array of genres: fiction, poetry, histories, travel literature, sermons, and scientific treatises.[10] Consequently, imaginative responses elicited by "indeterminate" literary texts receive equal attention with readers' more mundane analyses of nonfiction.[11]

In June 1839 a Boston-area Brahmin, Louisa Lee Waterhouse, recorded in her journal a discussion with her husband, Benjamin Waterhouse, about Thomas Hamilton's 1833 traveler's account, *Men and Manners in America*:

> [Dr.] Wiffie have you read this book?
>
> Mrs.—Yes—
>
> Dr.—What do you think of it?
>
> Mrs.—I like the book—there is much knowledge & thought, & I am inclined to think, truth, wit, but we don't like to hear the truth of ourselves.
>
> Dr.—The author has knowledge I grant, but I detest the fellow. The book is filled [with] what I call *John Bullery*,—it is a book got up for political purposes. I have known many such.[12]

[10] See Ronald J. Zboray, "Reading Patterns in Antebellum America: Evidence in the Charge Records of the New York Society Library," *Libraries and Culture*, 26 (1991), 301–33.

[11] Iser writes that "the more texts lose their determinacy, the more the reader is shifted into the full operation of their possible intentions" (*Prospecting*, p. 6). Accordingly modern fiction, being the most indeterminate of forms and closest to being truly "literary" (i.e., not factual), allows for the greatest interaction with readers (see *Prospecting*, chap. 1). However, readers' responses to nonfiction seem articulate and lively in the nineteenth century and must be taken into account for drawing a complete picture of such reactions. (The citations below of the works these readers mention reflect editions published closest to the dates of the relevant letters or diary entries. Priority was accorded to American and, particularly, to Boston publications over European ones. In most cases, first editions are not cited.)

[12] Louisa Lee Waterhouse, 16 June 1839, Journal, 1839–41, pp. 10–11, L. L. Waterhouse Papers, Massachusetts Historical Society (hereafter "MHS"); Thomas Hamilton, *Men and Manners in America* (Philadelphia: Carey, Lea, & Blanchard, 1833). Benjamin Waterhouse (1754–1846) was a physician famous for his experiments with smallpox inoculation. See William Martin Smallwood, *Natural History and the American Mind* (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1941), pp. 3, 60, 162, 289–90, 293–95, 300,

Louisa and Benjamin Waterhouse share a number of traits with other antebellum readers of their class. They, like most, discuss books on various levels: terse declarations of overall reaction, evaluations of usefulness, and scrutiny of the author's character or intentions. In an introspective revelation unusual in a diary, she opines "we don't like to hear the truth of ourselves" in responding to the text. Whether or not this conversation actually happened and with words even approximating those above remains uncertain, yet Waterhouse recorded her thoughts about *Men and Manners* (if even through the words of her husband to voice her conflicting views) so that she, or others, might recover them at a future date.[13]

Most diarists and letter writers did not go into such detail about their reading. The most common responses were simple and positive, conforming to the adage of not saying anything at all unless it is something nice. Such comments included "interesting," "amusing," "charming," "excellent," and, less often, "spritely" or "good natured."[14] Simple assertions such as these abound in manuscript sources but shed little light upon the reader's textual engagement beyond its pleasantness. "I have

Samuel A. Green, "Medicine in Boston," in *The Memorial History of Boston, Including Suffolk County, Massachusetts, 1630–1880*, ed. Justin Winsor, 4 vols. (Boston: Ticknor and Company, 1881–86), IV, 544–47; I. Bernard Cohen, ed., *The Life and Scientific and Medical Career of Benjamin Waterhouse: With Some Account of the Introduction of Vaccination in America*, 2 vols. (New York: Arno Press, 1980); and John Adams, *Statesman and Friend: Correspondence of John Adams with Benjamin Waterhouse, 1784–1822*, ed. Worthington Chauncey Ford (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1927).

[13] She records such "conversations" with either her husband or acquaintances several times throughout her journal (e.g., undated 1839, pp. 2–6; 16 and 26 June 1839, pp. 10–14, 77–78; 17 July 1839, pp. 17–19; 7 Aug. 1839, pp. 22–23; 14 Feb. 1840, pp. 117–24; 11 and 20 April 1840, pp. 129–30, 145–47), L. L. Waterhouse Papers, MHS. Many of these entries are humorous and seem at times almost too witty to have been spontaneous conversations.

[14] In *Novels, Readers, and Reviewers* Baym notes that "all reviewers acknowledged that the basis of the novel-reading experience was interest" (p. 54); on novels holding "interest," see esp. pp. 54–81, 271–72. Some other concise statements of interest include "fanciful," "dreamy," "refined," and "funny." See, for a few of many examples, Katharine Bigelow Lawrence, 19 Oct. 1850, Katharine Bigelow Lawrence Diaries, 1847–52, typescript transcript, vol. 3, p. 3, Lamb Family Papers, MHS; Mary (Gardner) Lowell, 29 Jan. 1851, Personal Journal, 1851, vol. 84, Francis Cabot Lowell Papers II, MHS; Hannah Lowell (Jackson) Cabot, 21 Feb. 1840, Diary, 1839–42, typescript transcript, p. 22, Almy Family Papers, Schlesinger Library, Radcliffe College (hereafter "SL"); Luella J. B. Case to Sarah E. Edgarton, 3 Sept. 1839, p. 3, Hooker Family Collection, SL.

been meaning to write during the last few days," Hannah Lowell Jackson told her sister Sarah (Jackson) Russell in 1839, "but Miss Martineau's new novel has proved too interesting to leave time for anything else."[15] Sarah Edes, a recent widow, recorded on an 1852 night too stormy to go out "Spent this evening in reading 'Sunbeams and Shadows,' a very interesting book "[16] Texts treated in this manner typically include novels and collections of poetry but also biography, history, and travel [17] As one writer exclaimed in 1846 of George Henry Borrow's historical account *The Bible in Spain*, it is "as interesting as a novel "[18]

While readers freely cited in their letters or diaries the "interesting" books they encountered, they rarely mention, without tempered criticism, uninteresting or disappointing ones Caroline Gardiner (Cary) Curtis in 1852 simply recorded "reading . in the afternoon, Hathorne's [*sic*] new book [*The Blithedale Romance*] which I do'nt [*sic*] like at all "[19] John Patton, writ-

[15] Hannah Lowell Jackson to Sarah (Jackson) Russell, 6 June 1839, typescript transcript, p 58 Almy Family Papers, SI, Harriet Martineau, *Deerbrook A Novel* (New York Harper and Brothers 1839)

[16] Sarah E Edes, 19 Jan 1852 Diary courtesy American Antiquarian Society (hereafter "AAS") George A Hulse McLeod, *Sunbeams and Shadows and Buds and Blossoms, or, Leaves from Aunt Minnie's Portfolio* (New York Appleton, 1851)

[17] Examples include Harriet Beecher Stowe, *Uncle Tom's Cabin, or Life Among the Lowly*, 2 vols (Boston John P Jewett 1852) Henry Wadsworth Longfellow *Voices of the Night* (Cambridge John Owen, 1839) Alfred Tennyson, *In Memoriam* (Boston Ticknor, Reed, and Fields, 1850) George Sand, *Jeanne*, 3 vols (Brussels Hauman 1844), Charles Dickens, *The Life and Adventures of Nicholas Nickleby* (Philadelphia Lea, Blanchard, 1839), Dickens, *The Old Curiosity Shop* (Philadelphia T B Peterson, 1840) John Bunyan *Pilgrim's Progress From This World to That Which Is to Come* (various editions available, Hartford Andrus, Judd, 1835), Agnes Strickland "Catherine of Braganza The Consort of Charles the Second of Great Britain and Ireland" in her *Lives of the Queens of England From the Norman Conquest, From the Official Records and Other Private and Public Authentic Documents*, 16 vols (1851, Philadelphia G Barrie and Sons 1902–3) X, 161–390, Henry Ware, Jr, *The Life of the Saviour*, 2d ed (Cambridge Munroe, 1834), and Robert Castell, *The Villas of the Ancients Illustrated* (London Castell 1728)

[18] Mary (Pierce) Poor to John Pierce and Lucy (Tappan) Pierce, 20 Dec 1846, p 2 Poor Family Papers, SI, George [Henry] Borrow, *The Bible in Spain, or, The Journeys, Adventures, and Imprisonments of an Englishman in an Attempt to Circulate the Scriptures in the Peninsula*, 12th ed (Philadelphia James M Campbell, 1845) For similar sentiments on John Ruskin's *The Stones of Venice*, 3 vols (New York Lovell, 1851), see Elizabeth Dwight to Ellen (Dwight) Twisleton, 31 July 1854, p 11, Cabot Family Collections, SI

[19] Caroline Gardiner (Cary) Curtis, 25 July 1852, Diary, 1852, Cary Family Papers III, MHS, Nathaniel Hawthorne, *The Blithedale Romance* (Boston Ticknor, Reed, and Fields, 1852) See Caroline Gardiner Curtis, *Memories of Fifty Years in the Last Century* (Boston privately printed, 1947), pp 1–99

ing in 1851 to his niece, Caroline Dall, of Castell's *Villas of the Ancients Illustrated*, merely stated "I do not think that it will interest you very much."[20] Among readers who registered their dislike of a book, some tried to subdue any strong negative emotions. For example, Georgina Lowell, after reading Alexandre Dumas's play *La Question d'Argent* in 1857, crossed out her first opinion, "stupid & senseless," and substituted a more genteel "did not interest me at all."[21]

While such blasé negativity may reflect a mere lack of engagement, it more likely served to subvert (albeit politely) conventional opinions or prescribed reactions to texts within the reading community. Such shallow responses may actually represent reluctance to commit to ink and paper the most intimate and perhaps idiosyncratic reflections. Moreover, letters and even diaries permitted little space in which to dwell upon matters not of immediate import. "I should be afraid of wearing out anyone's patience but yours, dear Lizzie, by such a dissertation upon books," Elizabeth Dwight wrote to her cousin in 1846, "but I believe you like to hear about them as well as I do."[22] Unless letter writers trusted their correspondent enough to share extended thoughts on books, they might express only an "interest" as a shorthand way of deeming a particular text worthy of some time investment. It is certain that the plethora of antebellum printed matter challenged people to be highly selective in their choice of reading.[23]

[20] John Patton to Caroline W. H. Dall, undated [1851?], p. 2, Caroline W. H. Dall Papers, SL. For similar treatment of Anna Jameson, *Memoirs and Essays Illustrative of Art, Literature, and Social Morals* (New York: Wiley and Putnam, 1846), see Charlotte Brooks Everett, 20 July 1846, Journal, p. 56, Everett-Downes Papers, MHS.

[21] Georgina Lowell, 11 Mar. 1857, Journal, vol. 51, Francis Cabot Lowell II Papers, MHS. Alexandre Dumas, Jr., *La Question d'Argent: Comédie en Cinq Actes en Prose* (New York: Lassall, 1857). Further evidence of readers' reluctance to criticize is offered by Charlotte Brooks Everett, who would only remark of Elizabeth Wormeley Latimer's latest novel, *Forest Hill: A Tale of Social Life in 1830–31* (London: Bentley, 1846), in person. She writes in her diary, 4 June 1846, p. 26, Everett-Downes Papers, MHS: "I finished it today and was charmed with it, though there are one or two things I mean to tell her of, which I do not like."

[22] Elizabeth Dwight to Elizabeth I. Eliot, 21 June 1846, p. 3, Cabot Family Collections, SL; for background, see Elizabeth [Dwight] Cabot, *Letters of Elizabeth Cabot*, [ed. Richard C. Cabot?], 2 vols. (Boston: privately printed, 1905).

[23] See, e.g., Mary (Watson) Willson to Sarah (Watson) Dana, 25 Mar. 1855, p. 2, Dana Family Papers, SL.

Another explanation for these terse responses may grow from readers' limited critical vocabularies; these readers certainly do not seem to have acquired such a vocabulary from contemporary critics.[24] Most of the few respondents who refer to reviews treat them skeptically.[25] These readers often distrusted the critic's claims to impartiality, especially when they disagreed with the review.[26] Louisa Lee Waterhouse, who favorably quoted the *Memoirs of Aaron Burr* at length in her diary, bristled in 1839 at the *New York Review*'s negative reaction. "It is evidently by an illiberal partizan," she fumed. "There were doubtless good traits in Burr & very bad traits, & he need not have been made worse than he was." She discussed the book with her husband, who had consulted a passage about Burr in one of John Quincy Adams's works, and she came away relieved that others "confirm[ed] the opinions" she held.[27] Feroline Fox, like Waterhouse and other readers, sought reaffirmation from reviews. In 1842, upon reading unfavorable criticism of the radical Unitarian Theodore Parker's recent work, Fox, a conservative within the fold, felt vindicated. She nonetheless distrusted her precipitous response: "I was unfair enough to read Mr[.] Morrison[']s [*sic*] review of

[24] On the state of criticism, see Baym, *Novels, Readers, and Reviewers*; and John Paul Pritchard, *The Literary Wise Men of Gotham: Criticism in New York, 1815–1860* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State Univ. Press, 1963).

[25] In *Novels, Readers, and Reviewers* Baym demonstrates that the discourse of reviews reflected assumed readers. Machor likewise points to the importance of reviewers who "conceiv[ed] themselves as surrogates and guides for their audience" ("Fiction and Informed Reading," p. 325). The commonalities between the discourse of reviewers and readers may be due to reviewers' attempts to tap into the language of response, rather than the other way around. Even so, that readers mention reviews at all highlights the role (albeit a limited one) of reviewers within the community of discourse.

[26] For their part, book reviewers often lacked objectivity and responsibility to the reading public; see William Charvat, "James T. Fields and the Beginnings of Book Promotion, 1840–1855," *Huntington Library Quarterly*, 8 (1944), 75–94; and Susan Barrera Fay, "Advertising Authors: The Puffing Scandal of the 1850s," a paper delivered at the Popular Culture Association Convention, Philadelphia, 13 April 1995.

[27] Louisa Lee Waterhouse, 15 and 17 Sept. 1839, Journal, pp. 37–40, 46–47, L. L. Waterhouse Papers, MHS. Aaron Burr, *Memoirs of Aaron Burr: With Miscellaneous Selections from His Correspondence*, ed. Matthew L. Davis, 2 vols. (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1837–38). The extensive review of the *Memoirs* that she addresses (*New York Review*, 2 [1838], 175–213) ends with a good example of the type of biased reviewing to which she reacted: "when [Burr] was laid in the grave, decency congratulated itself that a nuisance was removed, and good men were glad that God had seen fit to deliver society from the contaminating contact of a festering mass of moral putrefaction" (p. 213).

Mr[ ] Parker['] s book . without any intention of reading the work itself," she admitted to her sister, Mary (Pierce) Poor [28] In general, genteel readers who discussed certain books apologized (or were chastised) if they did not actually read them Otherwise, they tended to offer no opinions at all "But you say that you have not read the book [Carlyle's *Sartor Resartus*], so your criticism is not quite fair," Waterhouse scolded her husband in 1839 [29]

Sometimes readers qualified simple statements of interest or disinterest with other observations, most commonly on readability Readers commented on the difficulty of Old English, foreign-language, or translated works, even those otherwise favorably regarded For example, in 1846 Charlotte Brooks Everett found Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*, and the "Knight's Tale" in particular, "interesting" despite "the obsolete spelling" or "quaint old language " [30] Annie B Lawrence recorded in 1845 that even though "well translated & some of the ideas beautiful & expressed in the peculiarly impressive way," the *Life of Jean Paul Frederic Richter* remained "strangely German " [31] *Faust* presented a challenge even for the erudite Louisa Waterhouse [32] Aware that regional American dialects might pose a problem for some international readers, Hannah Lowell Jackson wrote

[28] Feroline (Pierce) Fox to Mary (Pierce) Poor 1 Aug 1842 p 3 Poor Family Papers, SL Fox was probably referring to J[ohn] H[opkins] M[orison?]'s review of Theodore Parker's *A Discourse of Matters Pertaining to Religion The Christian Examiner and General Review* 32 (1842) 337–95 On Fox's orthodoxy see McGovern *Yankee Family* pp 47–49 Lucy (Pierce) Hedge in letters to Mary (Pierce) Poor (4 Dec 1851 p 3 and 13 Mar 1853 p 2 both in Poor Family Papers SL), also mentions reviews from the *Inquirer* and the *Independent*

[29] Louisa Lee Waterhouse circa 24 Aug 1839 Journal p 100 L L Waterhouse Papers, MHS, Thomas Carlyle *Sartor Resartus in Three Books* (Boston James Munroe 1836) See also John Patton to Caroline W H Dall 13 Dec 1857 p 1 Caroline W H Dall Papers, SL

[30] Charlotte Brooks Everett 21 and 23 Sept 1846 Journal pp 89–90 Everett-Downes Papers MHS Geoffrey Chaucer *The Canterbury Tales of Chaucer* 3 vols (Edinburgh Nichol, 1841) Chaucer *The Knight's Tale and the Flower and the Leaf After Geoffrey Chaucer*, ed E H Thurlow 2d ed (London Booth 1822)

[31] Annie Bigelow Lawrence 25 April 1845 Annie B (Lawrence) Rotch Diaries 1838–50 vol 5 (4 Sept 1844–23 Jan 1847) Lamb Family Papers MHS Eliza Buckminster Lee *Life of Jean Paul Frederic Richter* 2 vols (Boston C C Little and J Brown 1842)

[32] Louisa Lee Waterhouse 30 Sept 1839 Journal pp 106–7 L L Waterhouse Papers, MHS

in 1836 to Sarah (Jackson) Russell regarding Orville Dewey's *The Old World* that "several Yankeeisms which I should think would shock . . . pure English taste" mar an otherwise "very interesting" book.[33]

Length, too, could pose problems for readers. It is obvious that some readers anticipated reward from particularly long or formidable texts, but they sometimes abandoned them out of frustration. Fourteen-year-old Elizabeth Clapp attempted but quickly felt exasperated by Maria Jane McIntosh's 622-page tome *The Lofty and the Lowly*, "as it is a very thick and large book, I did not read more than a few pages."[34] Older readers, such as Lucy (Pierce) Hedge, also admitted their failure before lengthy works. "Did you ever read Spenser's *Fairy Queen* [*sic*] through?" Lucy inquired in 1852 of her younger sister, Mary. "I had no idea it was so long a poem. Mr. Greene says he does not believe there are 3 people in Providence who have read it through."[35]

If difficult language or lengthiness could create obstacles to enjoying a text fully, so could a lack of realism.[36] Novels were most commonly criticized for this, but texts about national characteristics were, too. The Poor family deemed Dickens's *Nicholas Nickleby* "all exceedingly interesting" but "of doubtful tendency."[37] Melville's *Typee* evoked a similar incredulous reaction

[33] Hannah Lowell Jackson to Sarah (Jackson) Russell, 27 July 1836, typescript transcript, p. 16, Almy Family Papers, SL; Orville Dewey, *The Old World and the New; or, A Journal of Reflections and Observations Made on a Tour in Europe*, 2 vols. (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1836).

[34] Elizabeth Atherton Clapp, 13 Aug. 1853, Journal, 1852–54, p. 219, David Clapp Papers, MHS; Maria Jane McIntosh, *The Lofty and the Lowly; or, Good in All and None All-Good*, 2 vols. (New York: D. Appleton, 1853).

[35] Lucy (Pierce) Hedge to Mary (Pierce) Poor, 26 Mar. 1852, pp. 3–4, Poor Family Papers, SL; Edmund Spenser, *The Faerie Queene . . . with a Glossary* (London: Routledge, 1843).

[36] In *Novels, Readers, and Reviewers*, pp. 272–73, Baym discusses the departure of critics from readers over matters of verisimilitude in novels. Some novel readers proved an exception in that lack of realism hampered but certainly did not destroy their enjoyment of a novel.

[37] "Auld Auntie" [Abby Pierce] to Lucy (Pierce) Hedge, 25 Feb. 1840, p. 1, margin, postscript in a letter from Lucy (Tappan) Pierce to Lucy (Pierce) Hedge, 29 Jan. 1840; Mary Pierce to John Pierce and Lucy (Tappan) Pierce, 5 Oct. 1839, in a letter of 24 Sept. 1839, p. 3. Mary's future husband, Henry Varnum Poor, was the only family member who admired the work unqualifiably; he favorably compared Dickens to Shakespeare

from Charlotte Brooks Everett ("very sprightly & amusing, but of doubtful veracity"), as did Dumas père's *Count of Monte Cristo* "one of the most intensely interesting novels I ever read though absurdly improbable."[38] The same reader found an English politician's description of Americans (Warburton's *Hochelaga*) to be "amusing & good natured but somewhat caricatured."[39] The concern for a lack of objectivity was not confined to works on American character but extended to those dealing with other places. For example, in 1842 Mary (Pierce) Poor discussed C. Edwards Lester and his exposé of factory life, *The Glory and the Shame of England*: "The good author is rather too much given to make his own reflections & entertain us with his private opinions of men & things, these are very pious & well intended to be sure, but savoring a little to[o] much of egotism." Obviously affected by the depiction of industrial laborers' lives, Poor concluded: "It is too horrible to think of. I am sorry I have read the book & yet it is very interesting."[40]

Whether the book was unsatisfactory because of its "foreignness" or its noticeable lack of verisimilitude, it blocked the "flow" of the reading process and hence its enjoyment.[41] The time spent pondering over a strange word or usage inhibited comprehension. Incredible fictional passages could induce a distracting fit of laughter. "some parts are extremely affecting," Mary Pierce remarked on *Nicholas Nickleby* in 1839, "but ... so much that is ludicrous and it comes in so often that just as you feel ready to cry something laughable saves you the trouble and you feel as if such mirth was almost intruding upon the sad

(Henry Varnum Poor to Mary Pierce, 26 Jan. 1840, p. 3). All in the Poor Family Papers, SL.

[38] Charlotte Brooks Everett, 30 June and 3 Nov. 1846, Journal, pp. 44 and 106, Everett-Downes Papers, MHS. Herman Melville, *Typee: A Peep at Polynesian Life During a Four Months' Residence in a Valley of the Marquesas* (New York: Wiley and Putnam, 1846). Alexandre Dumas, Sr., *The Count of Monte Cristo* (Boston: Williams, 1846).

[39] Charlotte Brooks Everett, 22 Oct. 1846, Journal, p. 102, Everett-Downes Papers, MHS. George Drought Warburton, *Hochelaga; or, England in the New World*, ed. Eliot Warburton, 2 vols. (New York: Wiley and Putnam, 1846).

[40] Mary (Pierce) Poor to John Pierce and Lucy (Tappan) Pierce, 13 Jan. 1842, pp. 1–2, Poor Family Papers, SL. Charles Edwards Lester, *The Glory and the Shame of England* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1841).

[41] See Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, *Flow: The Psychology of Optimal Experience* (New York: Harper and Row, 1990).

thoughts occasioned by the preceeding [*sic*] lines."[12] Narratives of "real life" that rang falsely might subvert the author's intended atmosphere of verisimilitude.

It comes as no surprise, then, that readers most commonly praised texts for portraits of life imbued with "impartiality & truth," even if they generated discomfort.[13] For example, after finishing Maria Susanna Cummins's *Mabel Vaughan* in 1858, Cordelia E. Darrach expressed to Caroline A. (Briggs) Mason the painful memories invoked by this realistic novel: "The heartlessness of fashionable society is well depicted, for I have had some experience of it in my younger days, and I *never* liked it, never could bear it."[14] On the other hand, Charlotte Brooks Everett took pleasure in Julia Pardoe's *Confessions of a Pretty Woman*, a book that reaffirmed society's mores; it conveyed for the worldly Everett "an excellent idea of English high life."[15]

Readers often scrutinized a writer's ability to achieve verisimilitude even if they had no personal experience to confirm or challenge it. "She could'nt [*sic*] have seen much of it," a confounded Benjamin Waterhouse quipped in 1840 about Hannah Farnham Lee's depiction of intemperance in her novel *Rosanna*, yet "Mrs. L. seems to know all about Drunkenness." "She is an *observer*," chimed in Louisa Waterhouse, confident of her assessment of the author's accuracy.[16] Such a pronouncement based on little first-hand knowledge is echoed in Katharine Bigelow Lawrence's response in 1849 to George Craik's *The Ro-*

[12] Mary Pierce to John Pierce and Lucy (Tappan) Pierce, 5 Oct. 1839, in a letter of 24 Sept. 1839, p. 3, Poor Family Papers, SL.

[13] Louisa Lee Waterhouse, 14 Feb. 1840, Journal, p. 118, L. L. Waterhouse Papers, MHS, admired for those same virtues Michel Chevalier's *Society, Manners and Politics in the United States: Being a Series of Letters on North America*, trans. Thomas Gamaliel Bradford (Boston: Weeks, Jordan, 1839).

[14] Cordelia E. Darrach to Caroline A. (Briggs) Mason, 18 May 1858, p. 4, Briggs Family Papers, SL; Maria Susanna Cummins, *Mabel Vaughan* (Boston: Crosby, Nichols, 1858).

[15] Charlotte Brooks Everett, 22 June 1846, Journal, p. 39, Everett-Downes Papers, MHS; Julia Pardoe, *The Confessions of a Pretty Woman* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1846).

[16] Louisa Lee Waterhouse, 14 Feb. 1840, Journal, p. 119, L. L. Waterhouse Papers, MHS; Hannah Farnham (Sawyer) Lee, *Rosanna, or Scenes in Boston: A Story* (Cambridge: John Owen, 1839).

nce of the Peerage "it gives one very good insight into the vate life of bygone days."[17]

The assertion of the accuracy of "real life" portrayals—en of past times or unfamiliar situations—abounds in these mily papers. Some of this may be due to an equation of truth nd morality: if the text conformed to broadly conceived moral rinciples, it must be true. However, many readers drew upon different but analogous experience in order to test the veracity of texts. Correspondents could contemplate actual memories, situations, events, and contemporary conditions by comparing them to the reality constructed within the text. On a deeper level, these texts granted the reader authority. In discussing the text, readers could pass judgment not only upon the author's ability to render an experience believable but upon the writer's integrity as well. By making themselves the arbiters of truth and falsehood, these readers empowered themselves.

Readers also reacted positively to texts they deemed useful or instructive, and necessarily accurate. They commonly scrutinized printed material for its pedagogical value insofar as it had practical applications. Nonfiction, including histories, biographies, reference works, and scientific articles, overwhelm this category, although historical novels appear in small numbers too. Louisa Waterhouse, more politically vocal than many women, agreed with her husband in 1839 that John Adams's *American Constitution* could reveal "much knowledge on the science of government."[18] One woman, after an excursion to

[17] Katharine Bigelow Lawrence, 2 Nov. 1849, Diary, vol. 2, p. 7, Lamb Family Papers, MHS; George L. Craik, *The Romance of the Peerage; or, Curiosities of Family History*, 4 vols. (London: Chapman and Hall, 1848).

[18] Louisa Lee Waterhouse, undated entry, Journal, p. 3, I. I. Waterhouse Papers, MHS; John Adams, *A Defence of the Constitutions of Government of the United States of America, Against the Attack of M. Turgot in His Letter to Dr. Price, Dated the Twenty Second Day of March, 1778*, 3d ed., 3 vols. (Philadelphia: Cobbett, 1797). More than other readers, Waterhouse responds to useful texts. For example, she records on or around 24 Aug. 1839 (Journal, p. 94) that James Northcote's *The Life of Sir Joshua Reynolds, Late President of the Royal Academy*, 2 vols. (London: H. Colburn, 1819) contains "excellent remarks bearing on his profession." For its "light on Shakespeare's Plays" (14 Feb. 1840, Journal, p. 118) she commends Nathan Drake's *Shakspeare and His Times: Including the Biography of the Poet, Criticisms on His Genius and Writings, a New Chronology of His Plays, a Disquisition on the Object of His Sonnets, and a History of the Manners, Customs, and Amusements*

Rome, regretted not having a copy of William Ware's recent *Sketches of European Capitals* "it would have been very useful to me," she laments.[49] Katharine Bigelow Lawrence, daughter of the Boston Associate, Abbott Lawrence, kept apace with international affairs as well as science and technology. This knowledge helped her in her duties as a diplomat's daughter, particularly during the endless dinner conversations that the role entailed. Over an eight-day period in 1851, for example, she found valuable a wide array of texts, from articles in Charles Dickens's *Household Words* on "the manufacture of malt liquors" (from which she "learned a great deal") and the "Antideluvian [*sic*] World" that "contains a great deal of information" to Baird's pamphlet on *The Progress and Prospects of Christianity in the United States*, a treasure trove of facts on denominations.[50]

If verisimilitude could render a text meritorious, did "untruthfulness" mar the reading experience? As shown above, books could give pleasure in spite of lapses in credibility, but, just as likely, a book could arouse nothing but scorn for being false. Only a few works fall into this latter category, however, notable among them were exposés of families, including Abner Forbes's notorious *Rich Men of Massachusetts* (1851), a putative "who's who" that occasionally displeased members of families mentioned in it.[51] Ellis Gray Loring characterized it as "poorly written—full of gossip, & of course with constant mistakes of

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Superstitions, Poetry, and Elegant Literature of His Age, 2 vols. (London: T. Cadell and W. Davies, 1817). Of James Howell's *Epistolae Ho-Elianae: Familiar Letters Domestic and Foreign, Divided into Four Books, Partly Historical, Political, Philosophical, Upon Emergent Occasions*, 11th ed. (London: R. Ware, 1754), she writes, "interesting & informing, & as much to be relied on as history in any form" (9 April 1840, Journal, p. 124). Volume 2 of John Horne Tooke's *Epea Pteroenta: or, The Diversions of Purley* (London: Thomas Tegg, 1840) constitutes for her a "good reference Book" (14 June 1840, Journal, p. 202).

[49] Unidentified correspondent to "Sallie" [i.e., Sarah Cary], March c. 1850s, p. 3, Elizabeth Cabot (Cary) Agassiz Papers, 1838–1920, SL. William Ware, *Sketches of European Capitals* (Boston: Phillips, Sampson, 1851).

[50] Katharine Bigelow Lawrence, 24, 20, 19 and 17 Nov. 1851, Diary vol. 6, pp. 10–6, Lamb Family Papers, MHS; Robert Baird, *The Progress and Prospects of Christianity in the United States of America; with Remarks on the Subject of Slavery in America, and on the Intercourse between British and American Churches* (London: Partridge and Oakey, 1851).

[51] See Abner Forbes and J. W. Greene, *The Rich Men of Massachusetts: Containing a Statement of the Reputed Wealth of about Fifteen Hundred Persons, with Brief Sketches of More than One Thousand Characters* (Boston: Fetridge and Co., 1851).

fact."[52] Katharine Bigelow Lawrence exclaimed over it: "I have been looking at a most absurd book . . . which has neither the merit of truth, or wit to redeem its falsity."[53] But biographical fiction could arouse the same charges of libel, as it did for Abigail Pierce, who warned her sister Mary (Pierce) Poor about *Ruth Hall* and *The Life and Beauties of Fanny Fern*: "both ridiculous books, and very much against the author to publish things against her own family, which people say are entirely untrue." Abigail goes on to insist that even the truth should not be "spoken out in such a way."[54]

Books that transgressed the boundaries of realism and usefulness generally received negative responses. While departure from "truth" qualified as perhaps the most frequently voiced criticism—it may have been the most serious flaw a book could have—other traits lowered the estimation of a text. These included an unrelenting string of lurid images (Bulwer's *Lucretia*), an "unsatisfactory plot" (de Stael's *Corinne*), a "pompous spirit" (Patmore's *The Angel in the House*), and a "too personal" tone (Bremer's *Homes of the New World*).[55] Some of the more general or vague denunciations were couched in humor, as when

[52] Ellis Gray Loring to Anna Loring, 2 Oct. 1851, p. 4, Ellis Gray Loring Papers, SL.

[53] Katharine Bigelow Lawrence, 13 Nov. 1851, Diary, vol. 6, p. 4, Lamb Family Papers, MHS.

[54] Abigail Pierce to Mary (Pierce) Poor, 8 Mar. 1855, pp. 2–3, Poor Family Papers, SL. Sara Payson (Willis) Parton [Fanny Fern], *Ruth Hall: A Domestic Tale of the Present Time* (New York: Mason, 1855) and the anonymous *The Life and Beauties of Fanny Fern* (New York: H. Long and Brother, 1855). Louisa Lee Waterhouse bemoaned the inaccuracy of reference books such as Salem Town, *Town's Spelling Book: In Which Children Are Taught the Formation, Spelling and Meaning of Words* . . . (New York: Robinson, Pratt, 1838); she found it so "full of errors" that she claimed "the Devil" had a hand in it (2 Aug. 1839, Journal, p. 87, L. L. Waterhouse Papers, MHS).

[55] Katharine Bigelow Lawrence, 22 Feb. 1851, Diary, vol. 3, p. 73, Lamb Family Papers, MHS; Charlotte Brooks Everett, 15 Dec. 1846, Journal, p. 122, Everett-Downes Papers, MHS; Susanna Moore to Caroline W. H. Dall, 27 Nov. 1856, p. 8, Caroline W. H. Dall Papers, SL; Mary (Gardner) Lowell, 8 Nov. 1853, Personal Journal, Francis Cabot Lowell II Papers, MHS. Lowell also complained (13 Aug. 1853, Personal Journal) of the "slight story" in Elizabeth Cleghorn Gaskell, *Cranford* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1853). Edward Bulwer Lytton, *Lucretia, or, The Children of Night* (New York: Harper, 1846); (Anne-Louise Germaine) Madame de Stael, *Corinne, or Italy* (London, 1850); Coventry Kersey Dighton Patmore, *The Angel in the House* (London: Parker, 1854–56); Fredrika Bremer, *The Homes of the New World: Impressions of America*, trans. Mary Howitt, 2 vols. (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1853).

in 1854 Elizabeth Dwight wrote to her sister, Ellen (Dwight) Twisleton, "On the subject of Robertson's Charles Vth I have the most intense sympathy with you, for I have not only forgotten the book entirely but I have forgotten even the fact that I ever read it."[56]

Some readers compared texts invidiously. "I have read the Angel in the House," Elizabeth Dwight announced to Elizabeth L. Eliot in 1856, but she confessed: "I am afraid I must own to being a little disappointed in it." She explained: "It seemed to me a very broad imitation of *Tennyson*, & that impaired its beauty, of course, essentially, since we never can admire even a good copy, as much as even an inferior original."[57] Daniel F. Child and his family compared similar works by different writers and in one case preferred "the plain matter-of-fact details" of Stephens's Holy Land travelogue to Sarah Haight's *Letters from the Old World*.[58] Besides comparing the works of two different authors, readers sometimes judged a writer according to his or her past performances.[59] Katharine Bigelow Lawrence claimed

[56] Elizabeth Dwight to Ellen (Dwight) Twisleton, 20 Aug. 1854, pp. 1–2, Cabot Family Collections, SL; William Robertson, *The History of the Reign of the Emperor Charles V. With a View of the Progress of Society in Europe, From the Subversion of the Roman Empire to the Beginning of the Sixteenth Century* (New York: Harper, 1843).

[57] Elizabeth Dwight to Elizabeth L. Eliot, 27 May 1856, p. 6, Cabot Family Collections, SL. Cf. Miles Orvell, *The Real Thing: Imitation and Authenticity in American Culture, 1880–1940* (Chapel Hill: Univ. of North Carolina Press, 1989), p. xv, which dates such sentiments to a later time.

[58] Daniel F. Child and Mary D. Child, 11 May 1840, Diary, 1840, D. F. Child Papers, MHS; John Lloyd Stephens, *Incidents of Travel in Egypt, Arabia Petraea, and the Holy Land, by an American*, 3d ed., 2 vols. (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1838); Sarah (Rogers) Haight, *Letters from the Old World. By a Lady of New York* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1840).

[59] Examples of comparisons: Charlotte Brooks Everett claims that Edward Bulwer Lytton's *The New Timon: A Romance of London* (London: H. Colburn, 1846) rivals Sir Walter Scott "in public favor" (13 Dec. 1846, Journal, p. 122); Elizabeth Dwight to Ellen (Dwight) Twisleton, 15 Aug. 1854, p. 2, Cabot Family Collections, SL, weighs Elizabeth Missing Sewell's *Katharine Ashton* (New York: Appleton, 1854) against the author's other works; Benjamin Waterhouse (quoted in Louisa Lee Waterhouse, 1 Oct. 1839, Journal, pp. 53–54, L. L. Waterhouse Papers, MHS) believes that Scott's novels did "not equal in writing to *Tom Jones* and a few others"; Katharine Bigelow Lawrence compares Anna Jameson's *Memoirs and Essays Illustrative of Art* unfavorably to Hannah Farnham (Sawyer) Lee's *Historical Sketches of the Old Painters* (Boston: Hilliard, Gray, 1838)—"she does not give enough of the private lives of the painters, but a great deal about their paintings, which is instructive" (5 Mar. 1851, Diary, vol. 3, p. 81, Lamb Family Papers, MHS); John Patton assays poems in issues of the *Atlantic Monthly* and

in 1852, without explanation, that Longfellow's *Golden Legend* could not match up to *Evangeline*[60] Employing a "painterly metaphor," John Patton complained in 1855 that Charles Reade's *Christie Johnstone* "is very inferior as a work of art" to his *Peg Woffington*, though "neither of them is entitled to be called a novel any more than the rough sketch of the artist to be styled a painting "[61]

As might be expected, given the comparative discourse above, readers sometimes emphasized authors' personalities over the texts they produced[62] For example, the English traveler and commentator Harriet Martineau became the subject of discussion among readers[63] "I hear much said against Mrs[ ] Martineau," Mary Pierce observed in 1837, "her book it seems does not do much credit to the manner in which she requites hospitality & kind offices "[64] Other women writers fared better, as correspondents wondered how they produced books while rearing children and attending to household duties For example, Meriam Thompkins commiserated in 1839 with Harriet Beecher Stowe's domestic burdens but was also confounded as to "where she finds an interlude in the cares and torments of life—three babies extra—to conjure up such pretty fancies of the brain "[65]

Putnam's Monthly (to Caroline W H Dall, 13 Dec 1857 pp 3–4, Caroline W H Dall Papers, SI)

[60] Katharine Bigelow Lawrence 25 April 1852 Diary vol 7 p 37 Lamb Family Papers, MHS Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, *Evangeline A Tale of Acadie* (Boston Ticknor, Reed, and Fields 1850), and his *The Golden Legend* (Boston Ticknor, Reed and Fields, 1852)

[61] In *Novels, Readers, and Reviewers*, pp 155–60, Baym discusses this type of metaphor drawn from the fine arts John Patton to Caroline W H Dall, 30 Sept 1855, p 3 Caroline W H Dall Papers SI, Charles Reade *Christie Johnstone A Novel* (Boston Ticknor and Fields, 1855), and his *Peg Woffington A Novel* (Boston Ticknor and Fields 1855)

[62] Armstrong and Tennenhouse s *The Imaginary Puritan* addresses the modern fascination with authorship

[63] E g , John Patton to Caroline W H Dall 24 Oct 1854 pp 2–3 Caroline W H Dall Papers, SI

[64] Mary Pierce to John Pierce and Lucy (Tappan) Pierce 27 June 1837, in a letter of 19 June 1837, p 7, Poor Family Papers, SI , Harriet Martineau, *Society in America* 2 vols (New York Saunders and Otley 1837)

[65] Meriam Thompkins to Sarah Watson, 22 Jan 1839 p 2 Dana Family Papers SI Thompkins traveled to Cincinnati visited the Stowe family, and commented on Harriet's "stories for annuals " See Milton Rugoff, *The Beechers An American Family in the Nineteenth Century* (New York Harper and Row, 1981) pp 232–37

Louisa Waterhouse recorded a conversation about an anonymous would-be author, who apparently resided near or around Boston. Her qualities as a model of the women's sphere gained her admiration in spite of the sparse issuance from her pen.

> Lady. Is Mrs. H. W. a very sensible woman?
> Mrs. Yes she is.
> Lady. Does she write much?
> Mrs. I shouldn't think her a very sensible woman if she did, with her large family, her understanding is sufficiently manifested by her conversation well regulated household, & I may add, by a very faithful discharge of the various duties of life.[66]

In this way, as readers pondered and discussed women as authors, issues of importance in their own lives surfaced.

Readers wondered about the private lives and personalities of male authors as well. Elizabeth Dwight, for example, claimed in 1846 that Thomas Arnold "puts you so in mind of him at every sentence. I never read a book of the kind which showed more clearly the high principles of the writer."[67] In the same letter (p. 3) she also commented that, after reading Henry Ware, Jr.'s posthumous works, she understood why his students at Harvard Theological School expressed such "love" and "enthusiasm" for him.[68] John Ruskin, too, inspired curiosity. In July 1854 after Elizabeth Dwight read *Stones of Venice*, containing his "extravagant & absurd" opinions, she asked her sister, "Do you know anything about his private life[?] We heard the other day that he was separated from his wife, which seemed to me impossible."[69] Among the strong opinions of writers that Benjamin Waterhouse held, he reserved particular dislike for Laurence Sterne. He "was a fine but very laborious writer (but there was great labour)," Waterhouse granted, but "with all his talent, urbanity,

[66] Louisa Lee Waterhouse, 2 Oct. 1839, Journal, p. 55, L. L. Waterhouse Papers, MHS.

[67] Elizabeth Dwight to Elizabeth E. Eliot, 21 June 1846, p. 3, Cabot Family Collections, SL; Thomas Arnold, *Introductory Lectures on Modern History Delivered in Lent Term, MDCCCXLII. With the Inaugural Lecture Delivered in December, MDCCCXLI* (New York: Appleton, 1845).

[68] Henry Ware, Jr., *The Works of Henry Ware, Jr.*, 4 vols. (Boston: Munroe, 1846–47).

[69] Elizabeth Dwight to Ellen (Dwight) Twisleton, 31 July 1854, pp. 11–12, Cabot Family Collections, SL.

& gravity (& every other avity), [he] was a bad man, a bad husband, & a bad Father."[70]

Curiosity about authors could overshadow discussion of their works. One young woman wrote in 1839, for example, "There is a new novel out by Mr[.] Lothrop Motley called Morton's *something* I have forgotten what, I have not heard anything about it yet . . . I had no idea that he was literary but I have been told that he reads a great deal and that there are few men as well versed as he is in elegant literature."[71] Likewise, Elizabeth (Cary) Agassiz discussed the author of *Villette* without having read the book. "Her real name is Charlotte Brontey [*sic*] (don't know how to spell it) but she lives in great retirement, and indeed is kept almost a prisoner by her father, who is excessively jealous of her literary reputation, does'nt [*sic*] like it to be spoken of before him, and will not allow her to go into society, where it might bring her into notice."[72]

Some letter writers, despite their misgivings over reading reviews instead of the books themselves, expounded upon authors without feeling embarrassed of not knowing their work. The circle of literary acquaintances, even in Boston, was somewhat small, so many readers heard intimate news about local and visiting writers. Those writers who shared a face-to-face contact with readers (and became the subject of gossip) included Charles Dickens, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Margaret Fuller, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, Harriet Martineau, Theodore Parker, William Hickling Prescott, and Harriet Beecher Stowe.[73] These

[70] Benjamin Waterhouse, quoted in Louisa Lee Waterhouse, 1 Oct. 1839, Journal, pp. 54–55, L. L. Waterhouse Papers, SL.

[71] Catherine ("Cate") Jackson to Sarah (Jackson) Russell, 5 Oct. 1839, typescript transcript, p. 61, Almy Family Papers, SL; John Lothrop Motley, *Morton's Hope, or, The Memoirs of a Provincial*, 2 vols. (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1839).

[72] Elizabeth Cabot (Cary) Agassiz to Mrs. Thomas [i.e., Mary Perkins] Cary, 11 Mar. 1853, pp. 4–5, Elizabeth Cary Agassiz Papers, SL. Charlotte Bronte, *Villette* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1853). See Lucy Allen Paton, *Elizabeth Cary Agassiz: A Biography* (1919; New York: Arno Press, 1974).

[73] On Dickens: Anne B. Lawrence, 27 Jan. 1842, Diary, vol. 3 (29 Jan. 1841–14 Apr. 1843), Lamb Family Papers, MHS; on Emerson: Caroline Gardiner (Cary) Curtis, 26 Feb. 1859, Diary, Cary Family III Papers, MHS; on Fuller: Mary Pierce to Lucy (Pierce) Hedge, 30 June 1840, p. 1, Poor Family Papers, SL; on Longfellow: Sarah (Watson) Dana, 11 Sept. 1851, Account Book [i.e., diary], 1851, Dana Family Papers, SL;

writers' texts seldom remained entirely "faceless" for the local reading public. For example, Elizabeth (Cary) Agassiz wrote in 1853: "Dickens reminds me that Thackeray is here, lecturing three times a week, alternately with [Louis] Agassiz," her husband.[74] But readers even discussed in intimate terms authors they never met: "I am sorry you do not like my friend Mrs. C. F. Tonna," Elizabeth Pierce wrote to her sister Mary in 1843. "As you think it is evident she has some vanity, but who is faultless?"[75]

Beyond appraisals of authors' characters, readers esteemed good writing. They tended to praise not only style but also tone and depth of thought, the "genius" that guided the hand to write. "None but a great moral philosopher could have written them," Benjamin Waterhouse said of Walter Scott's novels.[76] Charles Mason, in an obviously romantic mood, wrote at length in 1853 to his fiancée about the Whittier volume he gave as "a *Love-Offering*": "I prize his Poetry for the beauty and richness of its diction, and the melody of its versification, but chiefly for its rare purity, its delicacy of sentiment, its Quakerly simplicity and directness."[77] Well-crafted prose that lent itself to oral recitation received special notice. Mary Pierce, a member of several reading circles, admired William Ware for this reason:

> We find Probus (which is read aloud at the meetings) intensely interesting. How beautifully Mr. Ware writes! His periods are so harmonious that they are easily read, and you are not obliged to gasp for breath ere you can reach some friendly comma to serve as a resting place, as is the case with the productions of some writers.[78]

on Martineau: Hannah Lowell Jackson to Sarah (Jackson) Russell, 18 Mar. 1836, typescript transcript, p. 15, Cabot Family Collections, SL; on Stowe: Meriam Thompkins to Sarah Watson, 22 Jan. 1839, p. 3, Dana Family Papers, SL.

[74] Elizabeth Cabot (Cary) Agassiz to Mrs. Thomas [i.e., Mary Perkins] Cary, 11 Mar. 1853, p. 2, Elizabeth Cary Agassiz Papers, SL.

[75] Elizabeth Pierce to Mary (Pierce) Poor, 22 Nov. 1843, postscript to Lucy (Tappan) Pierce to Mary (Pierce) Poor, 2 Nov. 1843, p. 4, Poor Family Papers, SL.

[76] Benjamin Waterhouse, quoted in Louisa Lee Waterhouse, 1 Oct. 1839, Journal, p. 53, L. L. Waterhouse Papers, MHS; see also Katharine Bigelow Lawrence, 17 Sept. 1848 and 31 May 1851, Diary, vol. 1, p. 19, and vol. 4, p. 65, Lamb Family Papers, MHS.

[77] Charles Mason to Caroline A. Briggs, 1 Jan. 1853, p. 1, Briggs Family Papers, SL; John Greenleaf Whittier, *Poems* (Boston: Mussey, 1850).

[78] Mary Pierce to John Pierce and Lucy (Tappan) Pierce, 20 Dec. 1838, p. 1, Poor Family Papers, SL; William Ware, *Probus, or, Rome in the Third Century, in Letters of Lucius*

In an age of popular lectures, public readings, and family reading circles, the ability to make writing come alive orally was greatly admired.

Whether the person was listening to a text or reading it, the response sometimes centered upon the personal consequences of the text. These could be psychological, almost physical, as Cordelia F. Darrach, suffering with a painful "neuralgia" during one particularly rainy New England spring in 1858, observed: "I could not settle myself to any other occupation than reading." She continued to confide to her friend that it is "a blessing . . . to be fond of reading, and to have access to books, particularly such as soothe and elevate the mind."[79] Another reader claimed similar benefits in 1852: her favorite author, J. B. Massillon, "always makes me feel better, and elevates my mind."[80] Such literary therapies could fail, of course, as happened to Caroline Gardiner (Cary) Curtis, who felt "dismal" after returning home to Winchester, Massachusetts, from a trip to Washington, D.C.: "At first I thought it was the reaction from my outing to the long, quiet days, and I recollect trying then to occupy my mind taking up a history of the House of Austria, which was of very little use in the first stages of what proved to be typhoid fever."[81] Effectiveness depended upon the illness, the text at hand, and the reader. Works deemed by some readers, especially religious ones, as "too exciting & *novelish* . . . not healthy for me" (Latimer's *Amabel*) or "painful & of a bad tendency" (Gore's *Peers and Parvenus*) could for others act as palliative.[82] Perusing a sermon one Sunday in 1851 after her fiancé canceled a visit, Caroline Gardiner Cary reported that she "felt

M. Piso [pseud.], *From Rome to Fausta, the Daughter of Gracchus, at Palmyra*, 2 vols. (New York: C. S. Francis, 1838).

[79] Cordelia F. Darrach to Caroline A. (Briggs) Mason, 18 May 1858, p. 3, Briggs Family Papers, SL.

[80] Katharine Bigelow Lawrence, 22 Sept. 1852, Diary, vol. 9, p. 35, Lamb Family Papers, SL.

[81] Curtis, *Memories of Fifty Years*, p. 104.

[82] Caroline (Pierce) Fox to Mary (Pierce) Poor, 16 Aug. 1853, p. 3, Poor Family Papers, SL; Charlotte Brooks Everett, 27 May 1846, Journal, p. 22, Everett-Downes Papers, MHS; Elizabeth Wormeley Latimer, *Amabel: A Family History* (New York: G. P. Putnam, 1853); Catherine Grace Frances Gore, *Peers and Parvenus: A Novel*, 3 vols. (London: H. Colburn, 1846).

worse" but then picked up Elizabeth Gaskell's novel *Mary Barton* and "felt better."[83] This same reader, however, relished her impish subversion and once recorded that she read Bulwer Lytton's *Ernest Maltravers* "till I felt quite wicked."[84]

Reader reaction sometimes, but not often, turned fanciful. Unusual in his elaborate recollections of youthful dreams, George Barrell Cheever wrote to his mother in 1838, while on a tour of the Middle East:

> Now I am here, in the capital of Egypt, *Grand* Cairo, in the very heart of the scenes of the Arabian Night's Entertainments, in a place and amidst a region, to which my childish imagination in those fascinating tales has often transported me. And what shall I say of the realization? The Cairo of the Caliphs' is not here, and I shall still keep my childish visions as a fairy land, for I am by no means willing to relinquish them.[85]

Similarly, Feroline (Pierce) Fox waxed poetic in 1856 after finishing the novel *Charles Auchester*: "I think I never read any work of fiction so elevating, ennobling, spiritualizing. Today I have breathed Heavenly air and heard divine melody from the influence of last night['']s reading."[86]

Like Fox, most readers, however, eschewed secularized fancy and spoke in terms of moral benefits or religious uplift upon finishing a text.[87] Often books with moralistic content, such as *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, provided the impetus. "It must do good," Mary E. Webster wrote shortly after its release in 1852,

[83] Caroline Gardiner Cary, 7 Sept. 1851, Diary, Cary Family III Papers, MHS; Elizabeth Cleghorn Gaskell, *Mary Barton: A Tale of Manchester Life* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1848).

[84] Caroline Gardiner Cary, 21 Jan. 1851, Diary, Cary Family III Papers, MHS; Edward Bulwer Lytton, *Ernest Maltravers, or the Eleusinia* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1842).

[85] George Barrell Cheever to Charlotte B. Cheever, 17 Jan. 1838, p. 1, Cheever Family Papers, courtesy AAS. Travel to places with literary connotations, especially to Sir Walter Scott's homeland, led other readers to flights of fancy. For trips to "Scottland," see Annie Bigelow Lawrence, Sept. 1843, Diary, vol. 4 (1 May 1843–10 July 1844), Lamb Family Papers, MHS; M. M. Phillips to Mary Cary, 23 Aug. 1840, p. 2, Elizabeth Cary Agassiz Papers, SL.

[86] Feroline (Pierce) Fox to Mary (Pierce) Poor, 24 Feb. 1856, p. 1, Poor Family Papers, SL; Elizabeth Sara Sheppard, *Charles Auchester, A Memorial*, 3 vols. (London: Hurst and Blackett, 1853).

[87] Cf. Baym, *Novels, Readers, and Reviewers*, chap. 6.

while others echoed her response.[88] Likewise, a biography of Charlotte Bronte gave Sarah Browne the impression that "any one must be made better, by its perusal," and she recommended it in 1857 to her school-age daughter.[89] Works (not tracts or sermons) that provided "spiritual benefit" included C. E. Tonna's *Personal Recollections* and *Judah's Lion*, Richmond's *Dairyman's Daughter*, and Phelps's *Sunny Side*.[90] Texts that imparted spiritual assistance were also called *beautiful* by readers; they rarely applied the word to novels, but they used it instead to describe sermons, eulogies, the classics, and essays. Among specific titles discussed in this way were the sequel to Lady Willoughby's *Diary*, Sampson Reed's *On the Growth of the Mind*, and Harriet Martineau's *Essays*.[91]

[88] Mary E. Webster to Caroline A. Briggs, 6 April 1852, p. 4, Briggs Family Papers, SL.

[89] Sarah Smith (Cox) Browne to Nellie Browne, 6 Nov. 1857, p. 1, margin, Browne Family Papers, SL; Elizabeth Cleghorn Gaskell, *The Life of Charlotte Brontë* (New York: D. Appleton, 1857).

[90] Elizabeth Pierce to Mary (Pierce) Poor, 22 Nov. 1843, p. 2, postscript to Lucy (Tappan) Pierce to Mary (Pierce) Poor, 2 Nov. 1843, Poor Family Papers, SL; Katharine Bigelow Lawrence, 19 Oct. 1851, Diary, vol. 5, p. 47, Lamb Family Papers, MHS; Lavius Hyde to Sarah Hyde, 12 May 1852, p. 1, Bradley-Hyde Family Papers, SL. Charlotte Elizabeth [Tonna], *Judah's Lion* (London: Seeley, 1843); [Tonna], *Personal Recollections* (New York: Taylor, 1842); Legh Richmond, *Annals of the Poor; or, Narratives of the Dairyman's Daughter, the Negro Servant, and the Young Cottager* (New York: American Tract Society, 1828); Elizabeth (Stuart) Phelps, *The Sunny Side; or, The Country Minister's Wife* (Boston: John P. Jewett, 1851).

[91] On newspaper eulogies on Sir Robert Peel: Katharine Bigelow Lawrence, 7 July 1850, Diary, vol. 2, pp. 90–91, Lamb Family Papers, MHS; on an anonymous sonnet: John Patton to Caroline W. H. Dall, 5 April 1855, p. 1, Caroline W. H. Dall Papers, SL; on Virgil: Mary Pierce to John Pierce and Lucy (Tappan) Pierce, 10 Mar. 1837, p. 1, Poor Family Papers, SL; on Willoughby: Annie Bigelow Lawrence, 14 July 1848, Diary, vol. 6 (23 Jan. 1847–2 Dec. 1850), Lamb Family Papers, SL; on Reed: Feroline (Pierce) Fox to Mary (Pierce) Poor, 23 April 1843, p. 1, Poor Family Papers, SL; on Martineau: Hannah Lowell Jackson to Sarah Russell, 18 Mar. 1836, typescript transcript, p. 15, Almy Family Papers, SL. The deeply religious Fox applies *beautiful* almost indiscriminately to her reading of Christian works; see her letters to Mary (Pierce) Poor, 18 Jan. 1849, p. 2; 29 Nov. 1850, p. 3; 11 Dec. 1851, p. 3; 21 Jan. 1855, p. 2; 3 Aug. 1855, p. 4; 2 Dec. 1855, p. 2; and 28 Feb. 1857, p. 3, Poor Family Papers, SL. Hannah Mary Rathbone, *Some Further Portions of the Diary of Lady Willoughby Which Do Relate to Her Domestic History and to the Events of the Latter Years of the Reign of King Charles the First, the Protectorate, and the Restoration* (London: Longman, Brown, Green, and Longmans, 1848); Sampson Reed, *Observations on the Growth of the Mind* (Boston: Clapp, 1838); Harriet Martineau, *The Essential Faith of the Universal Church Deduced from the Sacred Records* (Boston: Bowles, 1833); and Martineau, *The Faith as Unfolded by Many Prophets: An Essay* (Boston: Bowles, 1833).

As readers corresponded with others or wrote in their diaries, they often expressed emotions and made observations through characters they encountered. Some literary representations of people, especially those in novels, became ennobled to the reader. "What a lovely character was that of little Rose, and the blessed influence of her example is very beautifully sketched," Cordelia E. Darrach remarked in 1858 after reading *Mabel Vaughan*.[92] Katharine Bigelow Lawrence compared the protagonist in a Bulwer novel with men of her own day: "Harold was a true hero, but I am afraid no such men exist now."[93] Conversely, some characters, such as Becky Sharp in *Vanity Fair*, personified evil.[94] Historical figures could elicit response as well. Mary H. Belden in 1839 told her friend how William Robertson calculated "the bold, courageous and ambitious characters of Cortes and Pizarro" to "attract the attention, while the fate of the poor Indians excites sorrow and pity."[95]

In their discussions of books, women especially (but not necessarily always) modeled themselves on female characters.[96] But sometimes readers could refer to male characters as sharing traits with other women. For example, Elizabeth Dwight, writing to her sister in England in 1854, informed her: "I have had much pleasure in tracing your behavior in foreign parts under the character of Brown," as in Brown, Jones, and Robinson.[97] For

[92] Cordelia E. Darrach to Caroline A. (Briggs) Mason, 18 May 1858, p. 4, Briggs Family Papers, SL; Maria Susanna Cummins, *Mabel Vaughan* (Boston: Crosby, Nichols, 1858).

[93] Katharine Bigelow Lawrence, 31 May 1851, Diary, vol. 4, p. 65, Lamb Family Papers, MHS; Edward Bulwer Lytton, *Harold, the Last of the Saxon Kings* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1848).

[94] Katharine Bigelow Lawrence, 13 April 1852, Diary, vol. 7, p. 30, Lamb Family Papers, MHS; William Makepeace Thackeray, *Vanity Fair: A Novel Without a Hero* (New York: Harper, 1848).

[95] Mary H. Belden to Sarah Watson, 13 April 1839, p. 2, Dana Family Papers, SL; William Robertson, *The History of the Discovery and Settlement of America* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1831). See also Feroline (Pierce) Fox to Mary (Pierce) Poor, 23 April 1843, p. 2, Poor Family Papers, SL, on Madame Calderon de la Barca (i.e., Frances Erskine Inglis), *Life in Mexico, During a Residence of Two Years in That Country*, 2 vols. (Boston: Little, Brown, 1843).

[96] For later nineteenth-century counterparts to this behavior, see Sicherman, "Sense and Sensibility" and "Reading and Ambition."

[97] Elizabeth Dwight to Ellen (Dwight) Twisleton, 5 Mar. 1854, p. 5, Cabot Family Collections, SL; Richard Doyle, *The Foreign Tour of Messrs. Brown, Jones, and Robinson: Being the History of What They Saw, and Did, in Belgium, Germany, Switzerland, and Italy* (Lon-

the most part, however, readers seldom saw themselves reflected in the historical or fictional personalities they encountered in books. They instead admired the author's "power of *individualizing*"—his or her ability to create unique and memorable persons in writing.[98]

Readers, in their letters and diaries, rarely searched for deeper meaning, messages, or significance. They seldom pondered authorial intentions when they read novels; characters, tone, and setting more likely occupied their thoughts. One reader discusses not a novel but a speech in such a fashion: "the message conveys an idea that France is flourishing . . . though I suppose it is not intended to convey such a meaning."[99] Another says of Tennyson's *In Memoriam*, "often the meaning is not evident, but it is worth searching for."[100] There are few examples of readers withholding the obvious and self-conscious injection of the self into the interpretive process. Instead, readers personalized authors' messages and used themes as platforms for discussing personal issues. Mary Pierce, for example, brought up an 1841 *Dial* article on women intellectuals as a way of relaying to her fiancé her own conservative position on the women's sphere: "All this fuss about equality appears very ridiculous to me."[101] Sarah Josepha Hale's *The Lecturess*, a tale about the virtues of domesticity versus public life, had a similar effect, although a three-way discussion of the merits of the book left the Pierce sisters at odds with one another in 1840. "Elizabeth has been quite stirred up by it," Mary Pierce wrote to a friend,

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don: Bradbury and Evans, 1854). See also Feroline (Pierce) Fox to Mary (Pierce) Poor, 29 Nov. 1850, pp. 3–4, Poor Family Papers, SL, on the "feminine nature" of male friendship in Tennyson's *In Memoriam*.

[98] Cordelia F. Darrach to Caroline A. (Briggs) Mason, 18 May 1858, p. 3, Briggs Family Papers, SL. "Little Nell" of Dickens's *The Old Curiosity Shop* was one such character according to Mary Poor: "I never expect to meet [her] again in this world, so I shall not be disappointed at not finding her equal" (Mary [Pierce] Poor to Mary Hudson, 27 Feb. 1842, p. 3, Poor Family Papers, SL). Henry Varnum Poor felt that all of *Nicholas Nickleby*'s characters were "perfect in their way" (Henry Varnum Poor to Mary Pierce, 10 Feb. 1840, p. 3, Poor Family Papers, SL).

[99] Katharine Bigelow Lawrence, 6 Nov. 1851, Diary, vol. 6, p. 2, Lamb Family Papers, MHS.

[100] Feroline (Pierce) Fox to Mary (Pierce) Poor, 29 Nov. 1850, pp. 3–4, Poor Family Papers, SL.

[101] Mary Pierce to Henry Varnum Poor, 17 April 1841, pp. 2–3, Poor Family Papers, SL; Sophia Dana Ripley, "Woman," *Dial* 1 (1841): 362–66.

"and has pounced upon my innocent head a torrent of advice and council [*sic*] so that I fear she too may turn lecturess."[102]

It is paradoxical that, given the personalization of their reading, respondents seldom singled themselves out as the ideal reader for a book they had chosen. Often they wondered and made suggestions as to who else would benefit by examining a familiar text. At times they targeted specific audiences. Louisa Waterhouse felt assured that artists would gain by reading *The Life of Sir Joshua Reynolds* and scholars by taking up Daniel Neal's *History of the Puritans*.[103] Reverend Lavius Hyde recommended to his daughter in 1852 Phelps's *Sunny Side* as a "good book for a minister's wife."[104] Mary Poor's impression that her favorite childhood book, Mrs. Trimmer's *History of the Robins*, "will be a treasure" to other children led her to ask her parents for her old copy to share with the younger generation.[105] Elizabeth Pierce thought Dickens in general "too strong for the tender mind . . . like feeding a baby with mincepie."[106] Few readers commented that everyone should read certain works. Lavius Hyde's injunction to his daughter in 1852 about her promiscuous reading included the following: "I hope it will not be *inevitable* that every body should read every book. That would be an awful calamity," he admonished.[107] Most readers who recommended titles to family and friends well understood the importance of selectivity—governed by the nature of the personal relationship involved—in navigating through the ocean of antebellum print.

[102] Mary Pierce to Mary Hudson, 1 Mar. [1840?], pp. 3–4, Poor Family Papers, SL; Sarah Josepha Hale, *The Lecturess; or, Woman's Sphere* (Boston: Whipple and Damrell, 1839). For a consideration of this book, see Caroline Field Levander, "Bawdy Talk: The Politics of Women's Public Speech in *The Lecturess* and *The Bostonians*," *American Literature*, 67 (1995), 467–85.

[103] Louisa Lee Waterhouse, 24 Aug. 1839, 10 April 1840, Journal, pp. 94, 125, I, L. Waterhouse Papers, MHS; Daniel Neal, *The History of the Puritans; or, Protestant Nonconformists from the Reformation in 1517 to the Revolution in 1688* (London: T. Tegg, 1837).

[104] Lavius Hyde to Sarah Hyde, 12 May 1852, p. 1, Bradley-Hyde Family Papers, SL.

[105] Mary Pierce to John Pierce and Lucy (Tappan) Pierce, 13 Nov. 1838, p. 2, Poor Family Papers, SL; Sarah (Kirby) Trimmer, *History of the Robins: Designed for the Instruction of Children, Respecting Their Treatment of Animals* (Dublin: John Jones, 1819).

[106] Elizabeth Pierce to John Pierce and Lucy (Tappan) Pierce, 29 Mar. 1843, p. 2, Poor Family Papers, SL.

[107] Lavius Hyde to Sarah Hyde, 12 May 1852, pp. 1–2, Bradley-Hyde Family Papers, SL.

Unfortunately, evidence of actual page-by-page encounters with books eludes today's researcher. Readers, of course, could not hope to convey such experiences within the space of a few lines in a diary or letter. However, some evidence offers a glimpse into how readers engaged books in real time. Letter writers and diarists occasionally pointed out specific parts of a text as worthy of note. At times readers identified passages that gave them pause for thought or occasion for amusement. Sometimes books were read with the thoughts and conversations of another person in mind. Reading thus could conjure up the other person and become part of the response to the text. In 1839 Hannah Lowell Jackson, for example, read a chapter in Emerson's *Nature* (presumably section IV) in response to a conversation with a gentleman. "Wm[.] walked home with me & talked about the analogy between thoughts & words," Lowell wrote in her diary. "He seemed to think that there is a mysterious analogy between thoughts & words, between all spirit & matter . . . to which I agreed but I do not feel sure that I understand him exactly & he says there is a chapter in 'Nature' about it . . . ."[108] Likewise, in her diary Sarah Edes noted passages of Byron, the Bible, and even Webster's dictionary that her deceased husband read and reread. She vowed to read the "marked" parts to herself often.[109] Lucy (Tappan) Pierce strongly suggested in 1837 that her daughter "read attentively a letter written to *two* young Sisters—dated March 15th, 1830 page 283," in Harriet Winslow's *Memoirs*.[110]

Such indications about reading come as close to the actual experience in time as is possible. They suggest what the reader thought about while reading certain pages or chapters and what parts stood out. Surely memorization of passages (a common practice) meant longer-term engagement with certain parts of a text, which highlighted their significance. For example, on

[108] Hannah Lowell (Jackson) Cabot, Diary, 1839–42, 4 Sept. 1839, typescript transcript, p. 6, Almy Family Papers, SL. Ralph Waldo Emerson, *Nature* (Boston: J. Munroe, 1836).

[109] Sarah Edes, 9 Jan. 1852 and 26 Nov. 1852, Diary, courtesy AAS.

[110] Lucy (Tappan) Pierce to Mary Pierce, 4 June 1837, in a letter of 29 May 1837, p. 2, Poor Family Papers, SL; Harriet (Lathrop) Winslow, *A Memoir of Mrs. Harriet Wadsworth Winslow, Combining a Sketch of the Ceylon Mission* (New York: Leavitt, Lord, 1835).

one stormy autumn night in 1855 Annie Chamberlain wrote to her cousin that "I do not even know where you are on this terrible night or whether you remember me in it. I can do nothing. I can only remember and keep repeating the poem I read the other day":

> Rattle the windows, winds!
> Rain, drip on the pane!
> There are tears & sighs, in our hearts & eyes
> For the *life* we live *in vain*.[111]

Like words embedded in memory, intensive reading of texts (i.e., returning to them repeatedly) re-created an experience that often called to mind other people within the reading community with whom the text was at one time shared. Likewise, readers who anticipated corresponding with a family member or friend about a book read in common also altered the reading experience. As the reader engaged the text, the correspondent was never far from mind.[112]

As we have seen, at least some readers in the antebellum Boston region formed a habit with a correspondent (or in diary keeping) of detailed response. This discourse reveals a world of social exchange involving texts; people formulated their responses with others in mind. As such, these responses connote a level of engagement with a text that transcends atomized, individual experience. Reading thus was a transpersonal act, and interpretation of texts was conditioned by the conventions of communication. Of course, this discourse hardly conveys the entire range of responses to texts. The nature of discourse within personal papers often limited responses to terse, stylized phrases that fail to reflect the complex inter-

[111] Annie Chamberlain to Joshua Lawrence Chamberlain, 24 Oct. 1855, p. 1, Chamberlain-Adams Correspondence, 1827–1926, SL.

[112] But even diary keeping encourages a textualization of one's own life, a conscious record-keeping of events that include reading. On shared texts through letter writing, see Ronald J. Zboray, *A Fictive People*, chap. 8.

play between the individual readers and texts. But even brief discourse suggests reader response insofar as it unfolds in a series of comments (these particularly lend themselves to quantitative analysis).[113] Specific texts may in this light matter less than patterns of response distributed across a range of titles and expressed through a succession of letters or diary entries.

This essay suggests that the reactions contained in personal papers need not be relegated to the status of a subtext of the printed word; the discourse of response itself comprises a text to be analyzed as primary evidence of reading in history. By understanding such discourse as a text, we reformulate the key question that surrounds reader-response analysis from "What do readers tell us about a specific printed text?" to "What do they say about the nature of response?"

Response had less to do with the conveyance of unique personal experience than with the formation and maintenance of community—one that related its experiences with texts to everyday life. Remains from correspondence and diaries clearly reveal the overlap of reading with other activities. The discourse about texts is embedded in interchanges about social and familial relations, activities, and events. As reinforcement of these relations, readers at times attempted to guide an acquaintance through an enjoyable book, or they recommended certain passages that might evoke memories of particular persons. In this way, antebellum readers created a community through reading as the pages were processed, people were remembered, conversations recalled, and memories kindled.

The reading experience thus did not always isolate reader and text. An array of persons animated the reading session, much in the same way that Stanley Fish's "interpretive communities" penetrate atomized reading.[114] However, communities of antebellum readers directly activated the response to texts—shaping it through letters and conversations, reading groups, and lectures. Individualized readers, confident of their own

[113] See, for example, Zboray and Zboray, "Reading and Everyday Life in Antebellum Boston."

[114] See Stanley Fish, *Is There a Text in This Class? The Authority of Interpretive Communities* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1980), pp. 171–73.

unique, imaginative interpretation, remained as yet a minority. Dependent upon the larger reading community for friendship, feedback, entertainment, and, above all, discourse, antebellum readers seldom relished the isolation of solitary reading and response.[115] The many activities that accompanied reading (e.g., sewing, cooking, quilting, child care) often involved companionship.[116]

Discourse about reading will always remain a shadow of the real universe of thoughts, emotions, and, of course, responses to texts that may puzzle literary critics and historians alike. Antebellum personal papers reveal responses different from those of modern critics who intensively study canonical literature for its line-by-line significance, for often readers demonstrated an irreverence for texts that belies images of Victorian cultural piousness. Readers disregarded overly long or difficult works; they brashly insulted others, they soon forgot some, and remembered others only for their superficial and entertaining qualities. On the one hand, the application of historical methods—the search for "real readers"—can unearth these practices. On the other hand, readers, in their responses, also frustrate the historian who searches for objectivity and clarity, for they seldom allow more than a glimpse into their world. The interpretation of these clues requires a closer regard for the subjectivity of the letter writers and diarists than that to which historians are accustomed. Plumbing that subjectivity depends a good deal upon the incisive textual analysis that has been the province of literary scholars. A historicist approach that combines disciplines can unify text and context, the literary and the historical. This approach remains the most promising avenue for reconstructing the responses of nineteenth-century readers.

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[115] The historical creation of interpretation, "rhetorical hermeneutics," is explored in Steven Mailloux, *Rhetorical Power* (Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press, 1989), esp. chap. 6 on his use of "context" and determinate meaning, see pp. 8–14. Machor's "Fiction and Informed Reading" also explores, in reviewers, a historically grounded community of readers.

[116] See Zboray and Zboray, "Books, Reading, and the World of Goods in Antebellum New England."

Representing Pickwick: The Novel and the Law Courts

JONATHAN H. GROSSMAN

Mary Russell Mitford, writing in June 1837, introduces *The Pickwick Papers* (1836–37) to a friend in this way:

> So you never heard of the "Pickwick Papers!" Well! They publish a number once a month, and print 25,000. The bookseller has made about £10,000 by the speculation. It is fun—London life—but without any thing unpleasant. . . . It is rather fragmentary, except the trial (No. 11 or 12), which is as complete and perfect as any bit of comic writing in the English language. You must read the "Pickwick Papers."[1]

It is no accident that Mitford begins her discussion with the economics of *Pickwick* and ends with the book's changing shape—"fragmentary, except the trial." At the time she writes, *Pickwick* is ushering in a new era in the serialization of novels. With *Pickwick*, for the first time a serial begins drawing on the material that an author is producing month by month in order to construct a novel. Previous serialization of novels had proceeded by slicing up novels that had already been published in volume form. Hence Mitford's news here is about *Pickwick*, but that *Pickwick* itself is news—that is, that a fresh novel is being serialized—is the news behind her news. This is why literary critics

[1] *The Life of Mary Russell Mitford Told by Herself in Letters to Her Friends*, ed. A. G. K. L'Estrange, 2 vols. (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1870), II: 198.

rightly continue to turn to *Pickwick* to chart and analyze the dawning of the Victorian era of serialization in which "a number once a month," which could eventually be collated with its other numbers into a novel, was mass-marketed at a shilling apiece, making for "that beloved Victorian thing, 'a cheap luxury.'"[2] Yet though these critics have told the historical and economic story of *Pickwick* the book, they have overlooked that the story of Pickwick in itself conveys a story of *Pickwick*.

To look into the story of Pickwick for the historical and economic story of *Pickwick* becoming Dickens's first novel and of Dickens becoming a novelist, we can take a cue from Mitford's letter. Mitford predictably finds that *Pickwick* "is rather fragmentary," but she goes on to single out chapter 34, the "full and faithful Report of the memorable Trial of Bardell against Pickwick," as indeed the most memorable, "complete and perfect" part of the story. As she senses, the trial marks the transition of Dickens's work from "fragmentary" narrative sketches into the form of the Victorian novel. In fact, as we will see, Pickwick's visits to the law offices and the court are less about legal reform than about the novel's form and the establishment of the middle-class, professional author in the Victorian period. The novel and the law courts, as *Pickwick* shows us, are two historically interdependent storytelling forums.

As is well known, Dickens originally planned a fragmentary form for the "papers." His advertisement heralding the publication (and writing) of *The Pickwick Papers* says:

> High-roads and by-roads, towns and villages, public conveyances and their passengers, first-rate inns and road-side public houses, races, fairs, regattas, elections, meetings, market days—all the

[2] J. A. Sutherland, *Victorian Novelists and Publishers* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1976), p. 22. See also N. N. Feltes, *Modes of Production of Victorian Novels* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1986); Robert L. Patten, *Charles Dickens and His Publishers* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978); and Bill Bell, "Fiction in the Marketplace: Towards a Study of the Victorian Serial," in *Serials and Their Readers, 1620–1914*, ed. Robin Myers and Michael Harris (New Castle, Del.: Oak Knoll Press, 1993), pp. 125–44.

> scenes that can possibly occur to enliven a country place, and at which different traits of character may be observed and recognized, were alike visited and beheld, by the ardent Pickwick and his enthusiastic followers.[3]

From "high-roads" to "market days," this list, an itinerary of sorts, aptly advertises the shape that *Pickwick* initially takes: another series of loosely connected sketches by "Boz." This time various country places are to be "alike visited and beheld" tourist-style, as the passive construction underscores. Dickens does not set out to recount Pickwick's story but rather to capture the country "scenes" and by using these scenes, "at which different traits of character may be observed," to describe a range of characters. Pickwick is primarily a device, a body that justifies the movement of Dickens's narrator's gaze rather than a developing, speaking character. Even if the first illustrator and the publishers had not also already planned this wandering and almost plotless form, desiring at first only that a cheap writer provide six pages of text each month for four pictures, Dickens himself originally thought he understood the constraints of producing so-many-pages-per-month that were so soon turned into a published number. He thus concludes his advertisement by collapsing together the form of his text as series, its actual serial mode of production, and the fiction of its production as extracts from papers, announcing that "From the present appearance of these important documents, and the probable extent of the selections from them, it is presumed that the series will be completed in about twenty numbers" (p. 900).

It is a conflation that at first seems natural. Dickens himself explicitly apologizes in his first preface to the book that the serial mode of production has required him to produce a fragmentary form. In a later preface, however, he recants: "It was observed . . . that no ingenuity of plot was attempted, or even at that time considered very feasible by the author in connexion with the desultory mode of publication adopted . . . [but] experience and study have since taught me something" (p. 43).

[3] Charles Dickens, *The Posthumous Papers of the Pickwick Club*, ed. Robert L. Patten (New York: Penguin Books, 1972), Appendix A, p. 899. Further references to the novel are from this edition and are included in the text.

Beginning with *Oliver Twist* (1837–38), which he began while he was writing *Pickwick*, Dickens produced only heavily plotted narratives, therefore we can deduce with hindsight that this "experience and study" of fashioning an "ingenuity of plot" was gained through the writing of *Pickwick*.

It was in fact in *Pickwick* that Dickens first discovered an extended plot. Early in the writing he wrestled with his story to introduce a progression of the seasons. Eventually he roughly planned his numbers so that the characters' time corresponded to the month before publication time, thereby strengthening both his own planning and his audience's sense of ongoing participation in *Pickwick*.[4] However, as James Kinsley notes in his introduction to the Clarendon edition of *Pickwick*, an extended plot does not appear in the novel until "the opening of the affair of Mrs. Bardell, and so (by Dickens's design or discovery) the establishment of a coherent narrative structure."[5] Pickwick might set out to roam aimlessly and innocently through the country, but he soon returns to the city and is there eventually required to visit the courthouse, that most thoroughly urban building, for a trial that enmeshes him in a plot.

The introduction of the trial of Bardell against Pickwick calls forth the extended plotting that comes to characterize and dominate the form of even serialized Victorian novels. Once the "action" (as it is aptly called) against Pickwick for breach of promise of marriage is begun (p. 325), it structures the novel's action. The characters move toward the courthouse as a destination, constructing a trajectory: "it really is your intention to proceed with this action?" (p. 349); "I suppose you've heard what's going forward" (p. 446), "This action ... is expected to come on" (p. 508), "The trial's a comin' on" (p. 543). At the same time, the introduction of even the potential for a trial retroactively envelops earlier scenes in the new plot. The comic scene in which Mrs. Bardell mistakenly concludes that Pickwick has asked her to marry him becomes both a crime and a beginning, and all the other scenes, both before and after it, change into po-

[4] See David M. Bevington, "Seasonal Relevance in *The Pickwick Papers*," *Nineteenth-Century Fiction*, 16 (1961), 219–30.

[5] James Kinsley, introduction to Charles Dickens, *The Pickwick Papers*, ed. Kinsley (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986), p. xlvii.

tential evidence Suddenly able to return as testimony, these scenes take on a new coherence, as a horrified Mr Winkle discovers at the trial when he must testify to "the trifling circumstance of suspicion" of "Mr Pickwick's being found in a lady's sleeping apartment at midnight; which had terminated, he believed, in the breaking off of the projected marriage of the lady in question, and had led, he knew, to the whole party being forcibly carried before George Nupkins, Esq , magistrate and justice of the peace" (p 570) Part of the joke here, created by the trial, is that the kind-hearted Pickwick can be caught in a plot where none was planned A Pickwickian "plot," in the overlapping novelistic and legal senses of the term, is virtually an oxymoron. Nonetheless, for the reader the Pickwick trial does introduce an extended and ongoing plot, one that makes the serial novel itself akin to the periodical account of a trial in a contemporary newspaper In particular, it constructs the anticipation of a resolution For this very reason, the final marriages can seem anticlimactic and even irrelevant, the trial has driven the action The trial plot results in Pickwick's incarceration in Fleet, which is the actual focus of the end of the novel, and it leads finally, only a few chapters before the end, to its own dramatic resolution when Pickwick makes his final angry payment to the notorious lawyers Dodson and Fogg Much of the novel's plot has revolved around the trial

Yet the trial of Bardell against Pickwick ushers in a more complicated narrative transformation than simply the introduction of what Kinsley terms "narrative coherence," which is only plot in its most plodding sense As the serial becomes a novel, a tension between plot (personified by the lawyers with their machinations) and anecdote (personified by the good-hearted Pickwick) becomes a theme and problem animating the story. A Pickwickian worldview that revels in a fluid and fragmentary life, acknowledging only the temporary unity of vignettes, encounters an opposing (legal-novelistic) ideology in which system and underlying intrigue loom ominously In the end, when Pickwick finally pays off and is rid of the grasping lawyers Dodson and Fogg, his seeming escape betrays how deeply he has actually become enmeshed in the sort of continuous struggle characteristic of an extended plot. That extended plot, per-

sonified by the lawyers, only surfaces in the first place, however, because the lawyers threaten a trial at which a Pickwickian plot will necessarily be exposed, or rather because Dickens introduces a trial scene that itself calls forth an extended plot from Pickwick's story. As we will see, the depiction of a trial spawns a doubling of the story even though it remains a part of the story itself, and it conjures up doubles of the plotting author within the text in the shape of lawyers. A deconstructive reading might begin at this point: *Pickwick* takes its own representations and even its own authorship as its subject through a displacement. Yet that displacement crucially points us outside of a hermeneutics of textual self-reflection to a Victorian legal world. Dickens is creating *Pickwick* and himself as a novelist against and through his contemporary legal world. This sort of self-fashioning depends on a dialectic in which differences define and maintain each other. *Pickwick* forms part of a history of law and literature in which the "and" in *law and literature* is not—as is currently established practice—to be translated into either law *in* literature or law *as* literature.

From the first, the Pickwick trial foregrounds interpretation. Mrs. Bardell has understandably misinterpreted a conversation with Pickwick; she believes he has proposed marriage, though Pickwick has only been discussing his plans to hire Sam Weller. This initial misunderstanding is compounded when Pickwick's friends arrive just after Mrs. Bardell has fainted into Pickwick's arms. The comic misinterpretation in this scene is similar to several others in which Pickwick is mistaken for a philanderer or worse, though here, in contrast to a subsequent incident at a women's school, Pickwick has no recourse to corroborating testimony. Everyone within the story doubts him. For the reader, aligned with the omniscient narrator and Pickwick, the case initially does not pose much interpretive ambiguity. Pickwick is innocent, guilty only of his typical naiveté about the possible interpretations of his own behavior. At this point the only question seems to be how or even if this

misunderstanding between Mrs. Bardell and Pickwick will be resolved.

It is not until the letter announcing the legal action arrives, bringing new complexity and new characters into this confusion, that the novel's focus begins to shift from the comic quagmire of Pickwick and Mrs. Bardell to the hermeneutics that underlie it. Now forced to review explicitly the fashioning of interpretation that was at work in the original confusion, Pickwick declares of the situation, "What a dreadful conjunction of appearances! . . . We are all the victims of circumstances, and I the greatest" (pp. 326–27). In the same moment that he recognizes the dangers of misinterpretation, Pickwick detects that he is also a victim of misrepresentation—that is, that he is the main character of a plot constructed by the lawyers. "It's a conspiracy, . . . a base conspiracy between these two grasping attorneys, Dodson and Fogg" (p. 326). This "conspiracy" is reaffirmed for Pickwick when he visits Dodson and Fogg in order to inform them of his innocence, as if the matter were still merely a conflict of interpretations. The attorneys, of course, are indifferent. With the introduction of the lawyers, what was merely a dilemma of conflicting interpretations becomes a study in the manipulation of interpretations.

Dickens immediately affirms and explores the complex situation he has introduced through the lawyers. He does so by recreating a version of the larger trial plot in miniature without the lawyers. In scenes sandwiched between his visits to lawyers' offices, Pickwick leaves London briefly for Ipswich; he is back on the road, in the style of the beginning of the book. At an inn he embroils himself in the adventure about which Mr. Winkle will later testify at the Bardell trial. Pickwick accidentally ends up in an elderly woman's bedroom and provokes a misinterpretation that upsets a marriage proposal, initiating talk of a duel. As a result, Pickwick and his friends are brought before the local magistrate for a trial. The scene, as Philip Collins notes, is stock.[6] Indeed, that is the point. Dickens is exposing the difference between depicting a stock, traditional, rural trial held by a justice

[6] See *Dickens and Crime* (London: Macmillan, 1962), pp. 182–83.

of the peace in his chambers and the urban, lawyered trial of the London courtroom that he has just introduced into his story. He is imaginatively visiting a Fielding novel, and he finds it wanting. The magistrate trial predictably ends up focusing on the tyranny of Nupkins, his "wash-up" (worship), while Pickwick extricates himself simply by influencing the judge and not through a scene of retelling. In the magistrate's trial, lawyers are out of place, and, for Dickens and the reader, their absence reveals their import. Dickens thus affirms through a brief detour back into the country that there is a new order of trial and a new order of representation at work in his depiction of the lawyered London case of Bardell against Pickwick.

What Dickens slowly reveals—first at Dodson and Fogg's law office, then at Pickwick's barrister's office, and finally at the trial—is that the lawyer's profession is not only caught up in manipulating interpretations but is also immersed in writing and reading, in orchestrating discourses, and finally in telling stories for money. Through the depiction of these characters Dickens not only exposes the law profession but also constructs an analogue to his own predicament as author. These lawyers, bent on interpreting and constructing the character Pickwick and his story, are the authors within the novel.

In a general way the depiction of the lawyers registers simply the dismal, psychological underside of producing—at a feverish pitch of work—what John Forster calls the novel's "inexhaustible fun."[7] As Dickens once reminded his publishers when he was behind schedule, "spirits are not to be forced up to Pickwick point, every day",[8] and even when they are, the submerged cynicism that predominates in his later novels, and the economics that is driving the current labor, are still present in the work, cast into the characters of the lawyers. Hence, as Pickwick tells Sergeant Snubbin, his barrister:

> "Gentlemen of your profession, sir," continued Mr. Pickwick, "see the worst side of human nature. All its disputes, all its ill-will and

[7] *The Life of Charles Dickens*, ed. A. J. Hoppé, 2 vols. (London: Dent, 1966), I, 73.

[8] Dickens, letter to Chapman and Hall, 1 November 1836, in *The Letters of Charles Dickens, Volume One, 1820–1839*, ed. Madeline House and Graham Storey (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1965), p. 189.

> bad blood, rise up before you. You know from your experience of juries (I mean no disparagement to you, or them) how much depends upon *effect*. . . ." (p. 518)

Like a grimmer version of Dickens the professional author, the Sergeant is indeed concerned primarily with "*effect*"—its production is his "profession." In Phiz's illustration of this moment, Sergeant Snubbin is pausing from his work at his writing table; only a forensic wig distinguishes this particular writer as a barrister. Appropriately enough, then, the Sergeant responds to Pickwick here by ignoring him and returning to the labor of writing that Pickwick has interrupted and of which he will be the subject. Thus Dickens creates a foil not only for Pickwick but also for himself as author. Indeed, Sergeant Snubbin, writing amid dusty "heaps of papers" (p. 515), recalls Dickens's earlier self-representation in the advertisement and in the frame as the story's fictional "editor" who sorts through "multifarious documents" (p. 67) and "voluminous papers" (p. 236). It is also not much of a leap from this Sergeant within the novel to the book's dedication to Sergeant Talfourd, an author and a lawyer, for his work in parliament on the copyright issue.[9] All are signs that Dickens was struggling to establish for himself and for authors in general a new professional status and that he is doing so in part by looking to the figure of the lawyer.

From the very beginning of *Pickwick*, the story has been concerned with Dickens's establishment as a professional author. It is true that Dickens creates authorial surrogates in Jingle, a wordsmith who works in fragments; in Sam Weller, who oversees the character Pickwick, and even in Pickwick, who is himself a published author. In the first sentence of this first novel, however, Dickens signals that he is concerned not just with an abstract conception of authorship but with the work and professional potential of his authorship. The Genesis-like

[9] Aptly enough, the brief letter by Mary Mitford quoted at the beginning of this article goes on after celebrating *Pickwick* to disparage another book, which is much the fashion. . . . Mr. Sergeant Talfourd's Life of Charles Lamb" (II, 199). Talfourd was also a barrister in the Norton *v.* Melbourne case that Dickens reported as court reporter (*Morning Advertiser*, 23 June 1836) and then later drew upon in his depiction of the Bardell *v.* Pickwick case.

creation—"The first ray of light"—evoked here points to the fictional professional editor, and not just to Pickwick, as the (parodied) creation of every bombastic word and high-flown clause of this first, lengthy sentence:

> The first ray of light which illumines the gloom, and converts into a dazzling brilliancy that obscurity in which the earlier history of *the public career of the immortal Pickwick* would appear to be involved, is derived from the perusal of the following entry in the Transactions of the Pickwick Club, which the editor of these papers feels the highest pleasure in laying before his readers, as a proof of the careful attention, indefatigable assiduity, and nice discrimination, with which his search among the multifarious documents confided to him has been conducted.
>
> "May 12, 1827. . . ." (p. 67)

This passage is not creation *ex nihilo*, but *ex* Dickens. The sentence even turns its own creation inside out: with much comic pomp Dickens conjures both himself as author and his book to life. In other words, this first sentence is a *professional* in-the-beginning-there-was-the-word that proclaims the emergence of "the public career" of a Pickwick that is *Pickwick*—or rather, of a verbose editor who is at once a parody of Dickens and yet Dickens the parodist. With the traditional novelist's device of constructing a fictional editor, Dickens not only aligns himself with the likes of Sir Walter Scott, but he also constructs his own beginning as a novelist. Thus, as it turns out, we could do worse than to take this first line seriously as an instruction to peruse "the following entry" for "the first ray of light which illumines the gloom, and converts into a dazzling brilliancy that obscurity in which the earlier history of the public career of the immortal [Dickens] would appear to be involved"—for the very next sentence, "May 12, 1827," which is the first fictional entry and the putative beginning of the Papers, does provide an illuminating "first ray of light." As Steven Marcus has noted, this date is significant because in May 1827, at age fifteen, Dickens began his "public career."[10] He left school and took up his first

[10] See "Language into Structure: Pickwick Revisited," *Daedalus*, 101, no. 1 (1972), 187. The date as a beginning is underscored again in the next chapter of *Pickwick*: "That punctual servant . . . the sun, had just risen, and begun to strike a light on the morning of the thirteenth of May, one thousand eight hundred and twenty-seven, when Mr. Samuel Pickwick burst like another sun from his slumbers" (p. 72).

job within a middle-class working world Coming three years after he had been forced to work at the Blacking factory, where his dreams and his (class-based) self-image were rocked, this job marked the beginning of his (middle-class) life-plot Though in *David Copperfield* (1849–50) Dickens returns to the moment more cynically, the commencement of this job nonetheless is appropriately recounted in the title of chapter 23 of that novel "I . . . choose a Profession "[11]

That profession was the law In May 1827 Dickens began working as a clerk at the law firm of the solicitors Ellis and Blackmore His job lasted for roughly the same span of time (from May 1827 to November 1828) that *Pickwick*'s action covers (from May 1827 to August 1828), an amount of time that also roughly parallels the labor-time of writing the novel (which extended from February 1836 to October 1837) Thus, though when he begins *Pickwick* Dickens merely refers to the beginning of his own professional, middle-class career through the persona of a fictional editor, by midway through his novel he returns specifically to that beginning in the legal profession as a way of working out the complexity of his own ongoing development as a professional author

The lawyers, then, do not simply recall the fictional editor, they take on and refigure Dickens's self-representation as a professional at work, which the fictional editor performs initially In the introductory advertisement this editor, identified as "Boz," is at once a parodic self-representation and explicitly a working professional "a gentleman whom the publishers consider highly qualified for the task of arranging these important documents . . . [and who] is at present deeply immersed in his arduous labours" (p 900) By the end of the novel, however, this fictional editor and his "arduous labours" have disappeared, replaced by a clichéd, heroic authorial voice that addresses the reader from the lofty regions of "art," declaiming that "it is the fate of all authors or chroniclers to create imaginary friends, and lose them in the course of art" (p 896) The lawyers, meanwhile, are portraying the dirtier work They are the textual evi-

[11] Charles Dickens *David Copperfield* ed Nina Burgis (Oxford Clarendon Press 1981), p 290

dence within *Pickwick* that it is also Dickens's fate with this novel to exploit his "imaginary friends" as no one had quite done before as well as to experience his own exploitation—his own professionalization and commodification as author—as part of the precarious beginnings of his success For in contrast to even the original fictional editor of the frame, the lawyers are firmly within the story, where they emphasize—instead of suppressing, as the editor does—the fact that their work of representation is done for money

Although vilified by Pickwick, the lawyers nevertheless crucially expose his benign and principled world as one of moneyed ease, existing in tension with a grimmer working world in which relations are based on the cash nexus In doing so they point back to *Pickwick*'s own economic underside Like the lawyers within the novel, Dickens has mercenary designs of his own upon Pickwick The novel's plot, driven by the lawyers' successful quest for money, uneasily mirrors the book's—and Dickens's own—plot for money The depiction of the lawyers and their trial does not just usher in the novel's plot that plot itself is a displaced expression both of the plot *of* (rather than *in*) the book itself and of the author's current life—that is, of Dickens's self-conscious struggle toward a successful financial and professional debut. There is thus another side to Anny Sadrin's argument that the fragmentation in *Pickwick* reflects the fact that Dickens "had learned from cruel experience that life was unpredictable "[12] By the time he introduces the lawyers, Dickens is also experiencing his own "progress"—a financial progress It is ironic that, rather than precluding the creation of an extended plot as Dickens had originally supposed, the serial mode of production that kept Dickens writing as he and *Pickwick* rose to fame and financial success actually generates the novel's extended plot

The serial consumption of *Pickwick* also plays back into the production of the story of Pickwick. Perhaps some of the acidity of Dickens's depiction of the lawyers expresses how difficult it was for him to reconcile his workaday economics and labors with his own and his culture's myths of eternal art and genius

[12] "Fragmentation in *The Pickwick Papers*," *Dickens Studies Annual*, 22 (1993), 23

We know that, well before he was finished with *Pickwick*, Dickens hoped that "long after my hand is withered as the pens it held, Pickwick will be found on many a dusty shelf with many a better work."[13] Pain lurks behind this hope. Dickens is envisioning *Pickwick* as a lasting work of art (the respectable dust on this imaginary shelf is of a different sort than the dust in the lawyers' offices) at the very moment when *Pickwick*'s aura is deriving both from the audience's sense of ongoing participation in a fresh textual amusement ride and from the myth that an entire nation is concurrently consuming the story. Put another way, Dickens hopes his novel will be consumed in the tradition of expensive volumes in a personal (rather than a lending) library when it is actually selling much more like the celebrated court trials that he used to report for the newspapers.

So one might say: in the end Pickwick can go free, but only because the lawyers get their fees—as does Dickens. Or is it rather the publishers, Chapman and Hall, who, like an echo of Dodson and Fogg, get their fees from *Pickwick*? After all, Dickens was laboring for publishers who, like the lawyers within the novel, also had mercenary designs upon Pickwick. It is tempting to correlate the triangle of author, publisher, and book with a triangle formed within the novel by Pickwick's friendly lawyer Perker, Dodson and Fogg, and Pickwick. This serial novel might be read as a *roman a clef* of the production of the book itself. Yet the legal world that Dickens depicts should not be dismissed in order to turn the text upon itself. Nor should one make a noose out of too-tight correlations between Dickens's biography and the novel's legal world. *Pickwick*'s "lawyer-land," as John Glavin calls it,[14] is an overdetermined and imaginative displacement of Dickens's varying, contradictory, and compli-

[13] Letter to Chapman and Hall, 1 November 1836, in *Letters Volume One*, p. 189. This comment and indeed *Pickwick* itself should be read against the letters concerning *Pickwick*'s workaday progress. In the letters, which often conflate *Pickwick* the book and Pickwick the character, both *Pickwick* and Pickwick take on a different complexion in lines such as "whether they having all the *Pickwick* machinery in full operation, could not obtain for them a much larger sale" (letter to John Forster, 17 June 1837, in *Letters Volume One*, p. 273) and "When you have quite done counting the sovereigns received for Pickwick, I should be much obliged to you to send me up a few" (letter to Chapman and Hall, 6 August 1836, in *Letters Volume One*, p. 161).

[14] "Pickwick on the Wrong Side of the Door," *Dickens Studies Annual*, 22 (1993): 14.

cated concerns. Only as such should this lawyer-land be understood as a topology of his specific, but historical, struggle to establish himself as a professional novelist, fashioning himself and his work.

After all, disparaging depictions of law professionals did not stop Dickens, who had pursued entrance to the legal profession as early as two years before *Pickwick*, from finally becoming a law student in 1839, two years after *Pickwick* was completed. Of course, he had no intention of practicing law. As he put it: "I am (nominally, God knows) a Law Student, and have a certain number of 'terms to keep' before I can be called to the Bar; and it would be well for me to be called, as there are many little pickings to be got . . . which *can* only be bestowed on Barristers."[15] In a single breath Dickens calumniates the coterie that he hopes to join, capturing the essence of the whole (failed) attempt: mixed feelings toward lawyers were bound up with an envy of their professional status and financial security. What seems to matter most in this particular intricacy in his life and in the imagined world of *Pickwick* is that, unlike authors, lawyers had a well-defined, middle-class profession. The barristers especially had the qualifying and disciplinary association of the Inns of Court, official titles, their own books and journals, unwritten codes of etiquette, attractive aristocratic pretensions, and, perhaps most importantly, a centralized and narrow, urban, professional geography of office, court, and legal district.[16] This "world of the law," suggests Fred Kaplan, had been for Dickens at fifteen a newly "fluid, varied world, . . . in which he could move from his clerk's stool into the streets, into legal

[15] Dickens, letter to Madame De la Rue, 17 April 1846, in *The Letters of Charles Dickens: Volume Four, 1844–1846*, ed. Kathleen Tillotson (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1977), p. 534.

[16] See Daniel Duman on the barristers: "Pathway to Professionalism: The English Bar in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries," *Journal of Social History*, 13 (1980), 615–28. For a brief discussion of the professionalization of solicitors in the 1820s, see V. A. C. Gatrell's *The Hanging Tree: Execution and the English People, 1770–1868* (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1994), pp. 429–39. See chapter 10, "The Legal Profession," in J. H. Baker's *An Introduction to English Legal History*, 3d ed. (London: Butterworths, 1990) for a longer historical view as well as a cogent historical explanation of the serjeants at law, whose fading order ended in the Victorian period when its remaining privileges were made available to all barristers.

chambers, into the law courts, into administrative offices."[17] After a stint as court reporter in which this legal world became something he represented as well as being itself an enterprise of representing, in *Pickwick* Dickens could return imaginatively to this lawyer-land in order to explore the alleys of his own profession as novelist.

At the center of the novel's lawyer-land, in which the law offices can recall Dickens's own writing space, is the courthouse and its trial, where a story is told and voices are orchestrated, much as in the novel itself. Here a novelist's imaginative journey to the urban, physical structure of the court becomes an encounter with another structure for storytelling.

In *Pickwick* the courthouse and courtroom are revealed as building and room in which roles in the production of a narrative are turned into physical positions or sites, but predictably the only position that matters for Dickens is the lawyers'. Hence Pickwick might identify the other parts of the court when he enters—"That's the witness-box, I suppose?" "And that, that's where the jurymen sit, is it not?" (p. 553)—but, as his lawyer announces, "Mr. Pickwick himself had better sit by me," and

> the little man led him to the low seat just beneath the desks of the King's Counsel, which is constructed for the convenience of attorneys, who from that spot can whisper into the ear of the leading counsel. The occupants of this seat are invisible to the great body of spectators, inasmuch as they sit on a much lower level than either the barristers or the audience, whose seats are raised above the floor. Of course they have their backs to both, and their faces towards the judge. (p. 553)

This descriptive passage has an echo of Dickens the court reporter. Specifically, however, it goes to extraordinary lengths to situate Pickwick and the lawyers. It is not surprising that Phiz chose to illustrate this description (p. 558). In his picture Phiz

[17] *Dickens, A Biography* (New York: William Morrow and Co., 1988), p. 47.

leaves out the rest of the courtroom entirely, and yet the illustration, showing Sergeant Buzfuz as he makes his case against Pickwick, is nonetheless completely appropriate. The trial centers on Sergeant Buzfuz, the tale-telling barrister, as he relates a plausible—or at least Dickensian—account of Pickwick's actions. In *Pickwick* this Sergeant is to the trial much what Dickens is to his serial novel.

As Sergeant Buzfuz performs his story about Pickwick and Mrs. Bardell, he incorporates quotations and even interpolates letters, accompanied by their interpretation. Much of the humor throughout the chapter springs—after the fashion of Robert Surtees's comic trial of his character Jorrocks[18]—from the ridiculous portrait of Pickwick "the serpent" (p. 560) that the Sergeant goes to comic extremes to construct, or rather it springs from the ridiculous textual double of the character Pickwick that Dickens produces through the words of his authorial Sergeant character. Dickens the author takes a step back and reveals his mastery over the creation of Pickwick and his story by creating a character who presents an opposing characterization of Pickwick within *Pickwick*. Authorlike, the barrister produces character.

Indeed, Mr. Weller had warned earlier in the novel that the trial will be about the construction of "character."

> "Now I s'pose he'll want to call some witnesses to speak to his character, or p'haps to prove a alleybi. I've been a turnin' the bis'ness over in my mind, and he may make his-self easy, Sammy. I've got some friends as'll do either for him, but my adwice 'ud be this here—never mind the character, and stick to the alleybi. Nothing like a alleybi, Sammy, nothing." (p. 543)

Unfortunately, as Sam tries to tell him and as the narrator points out, an alibi is inadmissible in this civil case. In a larger sense, however, Mr. Weller rightly points out that "Verever he's a goin'

[18] See "Jorrocks in Trouble," *New Sporting Magazine*, 2 (1832), 248–56, later reprinted (after *Pickwick*'s publication) with revisions and additions as a chapter in *Jorrocks's Jaunts and Jollities* (1838). Surtees's piece laid the foundation for Dickens's own (mis)construction of his protagonist by lawyers. It lacked, however, the element of extended plot that makes the trial scene in Dickens's story into something like the center of a loose web.

to be tried, my boy, a alleybi's the thing to get him off" (p. 541)—that is, that without the absolute denial of proving Pickwick to have been bodily elsewhere and therefore part of another plot, the novel's trial hinges upon the art of representing Pickwick's "character." The difference here is more subtle than it might first appear. Dickens emphasizes through Mr. Weller that the issue in this trial is not whether Pickwick is the proper subject but rather how his character can be constructed in different ways. Mr. Weller's lament after the trial is telling: "I know'd what 'ud come o' this here mode o' doin' bisness. Oh Sammy, Sammy, vy worn't there a alleybi!" (p. 577). The "mode o' doin' bisness" has depended largely upon the construction of character, part of the mode of business of its author. The trial that introduces the extended plot also turns out to be inseparably focused upon the construction of character.

The trial scene even plays off of and calls attention to the author's ability to create characters. In the depiction of the trial the other barrister's speech, which would reconstruct Pickwick from Dickens's own point of view, is summarily quashed:

> Serjeant Snubbin then addressed the jury on behalf of the defendant, and a very long and a very emphatic address he delivered, in which he bestowed the highest possible eulogiums on the conduct and character of Mr. Pickwick, but inasmuch as our readers are far better able to form a correct estimate of that gentleman's merits and deserts, than Serjeant Snubbin could possibly be, we do not feel called upon to enter at any length into the learned gentleman's observations. (p. 575)

Dickens's direct address to "our readers" here explicitly betrays the otherwise tacit parallel between himself and the Sergeant; there is no need for this Sergeant to go over the part Dickens has already performed for the reader.[19] Thus though Dickens parodies the lawyers for their "excellent ideas of effect" (p. 556), he does so only by way of casting them into parallel authorial

[19] Especially for Dickens, who later became famous for his public readings, the genre of the novel was not only a silent art produced by one scribbling like a solicitor, but also a performance like the barrister Buzfuz's. Indeed, as Kathleen Tillotson points out, ongoing serial novels like *Pickwick* "gave back to story-telling its original context of performance" (*Novels of the Eighteen-Forties* [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1956], p. 36).

and narratorial roles. Pickwick becomes a character in the barrister's story as well as a character in Dickens's, the barrister's position presents a warped version of Dickens's position as author. In short, the narrative becomes reflexive.

The trial creates this reflexivity. If at first *Pickwick* is primarily a record of details, speeches, characters, and even scenes of misinterpretation, then after the introduction of the trial all these representations are potentially and explicitly to be represented. In other words, from the moment Pickwick and *Pickwick* begin to move toward the trial scene, Dickens adds to a narrative that originally represented the story of Pickwick a register that turns this story itself into an object of representation. Thus, in the court scene itself, the story's original representations, even the characters, become represented as the object of representation. Nowhere else is it clearer that, as J. Hillis Miller suggests, Pickwick, who sets out as "the spectator," "becomes himself a spectacle."[20] Nowhere is it clearer than in the trial scene that *Pickwick* represents a world in which character is itself a representation. In this way the novel comes to reflect upon representation itself. *Pickwick* becomes language picturing language users, everyone an author, all of them idiosyncratic; it becomes a genre of language that orchestrates genres of language—that is, it becomes a novel. Thus the process of representation that is the trial imagined within the novel brings out the novel itself as a reflexive process of representation.

Pickwick's trial represents the fact that the story has become a sort of Tower of Babel of competing voices. Before the trial, the introduction of the character Sam Weller most clearly shifts the narrative toward a novelistic state in which no single language—including the narrator's—exclusively possesses or dictates this fictional world. Sam Weller has a voice of his own. The omniscient narrator's voice, though still authoritative, from then on competes with the story's other voices. Hence in the depiction of the trial the narrator both stands against the representations made by the Sergeant and stands beside the voice of Sam Weller. As M. M. Bakhtin suggests of the novel in general,

[20] *Charles Dickens: The World of His Novels* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1958), p. 16.

"the 'depicting' authorial language now lies on the same plane as the 'depicted' language."[21] The introduction of Sam Weller, however, only divides the text into self-authorizing voices. The trial then figures this state within the narrative. Thus it not only depicts the achievement of the novel but, by making the narrative reflexive, it makes the novel.

Still, we must remember that the trial here is relentlessly depicted as a mean ploy for money and disparaged as such. In a sense the trial has been a trial of the lawyers themselves.[22] Dickens thereby creates and rightly distinguishes the ethical dimensions of two different sorts of representation. A novel is not a trial; Dickens is not, after all, a lawyer.

Yet it would also be a mistake to think that the lawyers in *Pickwick* are simply villains. Pickwick might sympathetically proclaim his judgment that "they are great scoundrels" (p. 512), but at the same time, the novel persistently reveals Pickwick's failure to comprehend that his moral high ground is erected upon his wealth and leisure-class status and that money has become increasingly important to maintaining his enchanted world. This is most obvious when the lawyer Perker protects Pickwick. He once scolds Pickwick: "if you *will* take the management of your affairs into your own hands after entrusting them to your solicitor, you must also take the consequences" (p. 512). Perker is a guardian, and thus he is much like Sam Weller, with whom he conspires to overcome Pickwick's "obstinacy" in order to spring Pickwick from Fleet prison. Perker's presence registers the ambivalence and complexity with which the novel actually presents the lawyers beneath Pickwick's fiery condemnation.

[21] *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays*, ed. Michael Holquist, trans. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist (Austin: Univ. of Texas Press, 1981), p. 27.

[22] Just a few years after finishing *Pickwick*, Dickens can be found putting the lawyers on trial in a court of print once again. In letters to *The Morning Chronicle* he protests "that license which is extended to counsel" of the sort Buzfuz takes (letter, 21 June 1840, in *The Letters of Charles Dickens: Volume Two, 1840–1841*, ed. Madeline House and Graham Storey [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969], p. 88). Outraged over "a barrister's right to defeat the ends of truth and justice by wantonly scattering aspersions upon innocent people," Dickens calls for a restraint of "their too free flights" (letter, 26 June 1840, in *Letters, Volume Two*, p. 91). Fiction making is, in short, dangerous in court; it should be left to the professionals. Predictably equivocal, Dickens announces at the outset of the 21 June letter that the "profession . . . is accounted (and justly so, when its duties are becomingly exercised) a highly honourable one" (*Letters, Volume Two*, pp. 86–87).

Thus when Pickwick calls them "great scoundrels" he must ignore the sensible defense of Perker, his own lawyer. "that's a matter of opinion, you know, and we won't dispute about terms, because of course you can't be expected to view these subjects with a *professional* eye" (p 512, emphasis added).

In the end, Pickwick can only furiously dismiss Dodson and Fogg after finally paying them off. The male world of Pickwick's homosocial camaraderie, which orbits around an almost absent set of female ciphers who culminate in Mrs Bardell, must finally give way to another male world that operates as a professional association As Pickwick bows to the lawyers' control he fails to see the significance of his own payment, which indicates at least his own inability to remain aloof from the professional and financial world of the lawyers No wonder Pickwick's final dismissal of Dodson and Fogg, though sympathetic, is clearly childish and, worse, rooted in class snobbery and a simplistic view of the effects created by his own wealth in outrage over their "insolent familiarity" (p. 847), he calls Dodson and Fogg "Robbers!" no less than five times Even if his display is not considered an overreaction to the "easy terms" he has actually gotten in the affair (a payment of roughly a hundred and fifty pounds, which Perker remarks "is nothing to" Pickwick [p 754]), Pickwick's insults are not just actionable by the libel laws of the day, as Dodson and Fogg angrily retort but mysteriously never pursue; the insults are also—it is more important—explicitly hurled in spite of his "friend Perker's wishes" (p 847) After this loud denouement, then, the actual complexity of the situation is quietly revealed when Pickwick turns to Perker and announces: "Well, now, let me have a settlement with you " Laughing, Perker slyly responds "Of the same kind as the last?" (p 848) Here Perker again points up what Pickwick cannot admit—that the lawyer on his side is not much more or less of a villain than the opposing lawyer. The lawyers are all employees, all professionals. At this point Pickwick can only ridiculously go on to insist on a world where money is absent even when he is handing it out, replying to Perker. "Not exactly, . . . I only mean a pecuniary settlement You have done me many acts of kindness that I can never repay, and have no wish to repay, for I prefer continuing the obligation" (p 848). The narrator, however, point-

edly continues, underscoring the financial world behind Pickwick's adventures even as it is cast as perfunctory business

> With this preface, the two friends dived into some very complicated accounts and vouchers, which, having been duly displayed and gone through by Perker, were at once discharged by Mr Pickwick with many professions of esteem and friendship (p 848)

A productive misreading here might recognize that Pickwick's only "professions" are indeed "esteem and friendship" The more important point, however, is that after Pickwick lambastes the lawyers Dodson and Fogg, the trial plot quietly concludes on the opposite note with Pickwick placidly sorting out finances with the lawyer Perker, as "two friends" In fact, Perker continues to appear in the final scenes as a jovial advisor who, authorlike, knows the characters "a great deal better than [they] know [themselves]" (pp. 851–55) In short, after revealing Pickwick's dismissal of the lawyers as simplistic, the novel signals a benign view of their profession.

All of this seems underscored by the fact that, interspersed with the final scenes with the wealthier characters, another lawyer emerges to play a large and friendly role for the Wellers This lawyer, Mr Pell, a self-described "professional man" (p 869), helps to settle Mrs Weller's will, the novel's final legal affair At first, because the matter of executing the will has no direct connection to the legal plot that has preceded it, this part of the novel's ending seems tacked on It may even appear to be a return to the fragmentation of the beginning However, the matter of the will makes sense in terms of the imaginative work that the legal plot has thus far performed, for the successful settling of Mrs. Weller's will produces the same final (imperfect) comfort with the legal profession among the working-class characters that has been produced among the gentrified and middle-class characters by Pickwick's trial Thus, as a result of this episode, in this novel so notorious for its disparagement of lawyers, Phiz's final sketch is nevertheless strangely fitting it pictures Sam, his father, and their friends raising their glasses in a toast to a lawyer Pell's response to this toast sounds like Dickens imagining his own potential response at one of the business-dinner celebrations of *Pickwick*'s success

> "Well, gentleman, all I can say is, that such marks of confidence must be very gratifying to a professional man. I don't wish to say anything that might appear egotistical, gentlemen, but I'm very glad, for your own sakes, that you came to me; that's all. If you had gone to any low member of the profession, it's my firm conviction, and I assure you of it as a fact, that you would have found yourselves in Queer Street before this." (p. 873)

It would have been an apt thought for Dickens as he finished *Pickwick*, at least, for both within and without the novel there has been a successful negotiation of lawyer-land.

As is so often the case, however, at the same time that a resolution is established, the narrative tension ostensibly being resolved reaches its straining point. The final affair of Mr. Weller's inheritance produces some of the novel's most disingenuous and inconsistent moves. Mr. Weller's final decision concerning his newfound wealth is "that it ain't o' no use to me. I'm a goin' to vork a coach reg'lar" (p. 882)—that is, that the best thing this sharp, working-class character can think of to do with his money is to give it away as fast as he can to the richest character he knows. When the story thus veritably screams the message of harmony between classes that the relationship of Sam to Pickwick affirms and creates throughout the novel, the question is how it ever got to quite this pitch.

An answer—and a more profound betrayal of the working-class Mr. Weller's character—lies just before this scene, in the legal shenanigans. Mr. Weller's inheritance is paradoxically less important as money (which he cannot unload too fast) than as the novel's vehicle for representing the idea that even the working-class identities are the harmonious subjects of the civil courts. That is, the *deus ex machina* is the money that Mr. Weller inherits—not because it equalizes the already pleasant class relations but because it transports Mr. Weller, Sam, and several other almost anonymous working-class characters into the propertied arena of the civil courts in the novel's final scenes.

It is hardly necessary to show that Mr. Weller is content with his lot, since this is something the reader already knows. Instead, the result of Mr. Weller's inheritance is that the novel shows

that he too must negotiate the same civil legal world to which Pickwick has just bowed. Sam stops Mr. Weller from burning the will that names him "eggzekiter" (executor), even though, as Mr. Weller points out, the affair is only between himself and Sam. As Sam informs his father, the will "must be proved, and probated, and swore to, and all manner o' formalities" (p. 867). In response to this information Mr. Weller conjures up the only court that he is familiar with that figures money: "Ve'll have this here, brought afore the Solvent Court directly" (p. 867). As Sam, ever the canny mediator between classes, then admonishes, Mr. Weller has "Old Baileys, and Solvent Courts, and allevbis, and ev'ry species o' gammon alvays a runnin' through his brain" (p. 867). Yet Mr. Weller, of course, only knows the grim side of the law. His "conviction that the Old Bailey was the supreme court of judicature in this country, and that its rules and forms of proceeding regulated and controlled the practice of all other courts of justice whatsoever" (p. 544) makes sense because, as Douglas Hay puts it, though "most of the law and the lawyers were concerned with the civil dealings which propertied men had with one another, most men, the unpropertied labouring poor, met the law as criminal sanction."[23] In marked contrast to Pickwick, Mr. Weller's problem is not that he feels the law is petty, but just the opposite. In the final adventures of Mr. Weller, class harmony is signaled in part by banishing the specter of the Old Bailey. All the characters are finally embraced by the middle class as the juridical subjects of their civil courts. The fairy-tale ending is not Weller's inheritance but his success in civil court.

The strange logic of *Pickwick* that lies behind Weller's inheritance is that though the central legal plot has realistically left out the working class, in order to have his ending provide resolution Dickens must imagine a codicil in which his working-class characters successfully negotiate the civil courts. In these scenes, then, it is as if Dickens makes a conflicted attempt at depicting classlessness, even though his fiction is best charac-

[23] "Property, Authority and the Criminal Law," in Douglas H[illegible] *[illegible] Tree: Crime and Society in Eighteenth-Century E[illegible]* [illegible] [New Y]ork: Pantheon, 1975), p. 22.

terized by its attention to class. Yet concluding *Pickwick* with an imaginative cancellation of working-class concerns makes sense in a multitude of ways in light of the class anxiety operating behind the scenes upon Dickens himself. His own uneasy entrance into the labors of middle-class professionalism cannot help but find its way into this novel *Pickwick* is producing Dickens as much as he is producing it, and this particular ending reveals just how overdetermined the lawyers and the civil courts have become for him and for this story

Why would Dickens find the courthouse a particularly apt place to explore the intersection of the form of the novel and his own middle-class professionalization? The answer does not lie in the history of law reform in the 1830s, which would seem to be the obvious context for *Pickwick* Though Dickens has often been pictured as a crusader for legal reform, his legal scenes, in the last instance, are not attempts to intervene in politics or policy *Pickwick* is not a novel with a purpose—a *roman à thèse*—any more than is *Bleak House*, which Dickens lamely defended for its anachronistic attack on a reformed and reforming Court of Chancery. For one thing, as we have seen, the legal forensics of *Pickwick* are freighted with other meanings, such as Dickens's own concurrent professionalization. Dickens is a novelist, and so perhaps the best way to describe him and his imaginative legal milieus is to say that under the influence of experiences close to home, he metamorphosizes what he sees When Dickens imaginatively traverses and creates a "world of law," he turns not so much to the abstract, specific concerns, debates, and issues of contemporary legal reform as to the palpable places, the human participants, and the daily relations and work of the legal world he had experienced. Hence the sort of law reform that matters here is, in part, simply the actual production of both the criminal and civil courthouses as central, city buildings When in *Pickwick* Dickens finds that the study of the justice of the peace represents the eighteenth century

and its style, he sets out to explore the new forum of the urban courthouse and legal district and his own era's style In this way *Pickwick* heralds the lawyered, urban civil courthouse

It is no coincidence, then, that when Dickens was imagining *Pickwick*, other Victorians were imagining the most impressive courthouse ever built in England, the Royal Courts of Justice. They were moving in synchrony As Dickens was writing his novel, the architectural debate and planning of London's immense Royal Courts were just beginning Unlike *Pickwick*, the production of the Royal Courts subsequently took the greater part of the Victorian period. (The cathedral-like courthouse on the Strand finally opened for civil cases in 1882 and is still in use) As early as the 1830s the law courts had come to be seen as deserving a central, urban building in their own right, one to rival even parliament's palace

The law courts had come a long way from their old place in Westminster hall There, as J H Baker notes, the superior courts had neither been closed off from a "throng of suitors, lawyers, shopkeepers, cutpurses [pickpockets] and sightseers in the body of the hall," nor divided from each other by screens until the eighteenth century (p 44) So even though courthouses, or at least courtrooms in parish halls, had been built everywhere in large numbers in the second half of the eighteenth century, it was the Victorians who turned the courthouse into a majestic, central, urban building in its own right They also theorized the designs for the modern courthouse As David Brownlee's *The Law Courts* recounts, this codification primarily involved the establishment "of wholly separate circulation patterns for the different types of people who might have business in the building "[21] The resulting maze of doors and corridors built the

[21] *The Law Courts The Architecture of George Edmund Street* (Cambridge, Mass MIT Press 1984), p 55 If architecture is expression in space, the Royal Courts themselves seem shaped in form and function like a Victorian novel Thus the member of parliament who said of the Royal Courts that we have set ourselves to build a sort of Tower of Babel" (Brownlee, p 191) also might have added that this particular Tower of Babel would be remarkable for the fact that despite its monstrous size it carefully organized the separation and intersections of its denizens with what the *Times* declared were "plans ten times more intricate and incomprehensible than the Labyrinth of Crete" (London *Times*, 19 November 1867, quoted in Brownlee p 102)

trial's particular division of labor (such as judges, jury, and lawyers) into the courthouse space The explicit object of this "principle of separation throughout the entire building" was simply administrative—to smooth the movement and functioning of "the legal professionals" (Brownlee, p 55) The shaping of the courthouse building was a part of the rise of the immense Victorian administrative machinery Driving this particular architectural bureaucratization was the rise of the middle-class professionals—specifically in this case the rise of the middle-class lawyers, who had begun their surge in the previous century.

The Victorians eventually constructed the Royal Courts of Justice in a most pragmatic place at the heart of the legal district, amid the centers of journalism and printing The Courts were not in the location on the Thames embankment that had been championed, in part, by secular aesthetics They were not where they were at "the beginning of the nineteenth century, [when] the superior courts themselves were clustered in the vicinity of the royal Palace of Westminster . where their location reflected their origin as an extension of the King's personal judgment" (Brownlee, p 40) They were also no longer scattered, as they were to a certain extent during the decades of planning and building Instead they were erected in a single building in the legal district, a short distance from the Old Bailey, which handled the criminal cases The move, like the designs of the courthouse, underscored the fact that the courts were firmly in the hands of middle-class professionals

Caught up in this history is *Pickwick,* written just as "the discussion of the architectural component of law reform began in earnest in the 1830s" (Brownlee, p. 52)—that is, with the lawyers in the midst of a solidification of the justice system that would signal their professional, middle-class control by literally reshaping the landscape Thus John Glavin can aptly write of *Pickwick* that it "witnesses the early nineteenth century's crucial transfer of male hegemony from an earlier to a later form of capitalist ideology, from a culture of 'commercial humanism' to the ideology of administration· lawyer-land" (p 14).

It need only be added that, in this trip through lawyer-land, the story of *Pickwick* also tacitly explores a novel-land. Dickens invests in this lawyer-land a displaced version of the

story of *Pickwick* and of his own debut as a novelist, and, at the same time, he discovers in the Victorian legal world an answer to what he and his novel might be. *Pickwick* brings us news from lawyer-land of both a new middle-class, professional role for the author and a new Victorian structure for the novel.

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Mothers without Children, Unity without Plot: *Cranford*'s Radical Charm

MARGARET CASE CROSKERY

Early in the modern critical reappraisal of Elizabeth Gaskell, John Gross perceptively warned that Gaskell's charm might lead critics to undervalue her work despite the fact that "her reputation has held steady for a hundred years."[1] This is both an odd warning and an apt one, especially in the case of *Cranford* (1851–53), which is perhaps the most charming of all of Gaskell's works. I will argue that this novel's "charm" presents something of a critical challenge to our current understanding of narrative as something that mimics the compulsions of desire.[2] With its emphasis on compelling desire and entrapment, recent models of narrative often equate the structure of desire with the structure of narrative itself. However, as George Eliot notes about *Tristram Shandy*, certain types of desires cannot be represented in conventional novelistic structures:

> What is the best way of telling a story? Since the standard must be the interest of the audience, there must be several or many good ways rather than one best. Why should a story not be told

[1] "Mrs Gaskell," in *The Victorian Novel: Modern Essays in Criticism*, ed. Ian Watt (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1971), p. 247.

[2] See Peter Brooks, *Reading for the Plot: Design and Intention in Narrative* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1984).

> in the most irregular fashion that an author's idiosyncrasy may prompt, provided that he gives us what we can enjoy? The objections to Sterne's wild way of telling 'Tristram Shandy' lie more solidly in the quality of the interrupting matter than in the fact of interruption.[3]

Wayne C. Booth makes a similar point when he notes that the representation of desires (or other emotive forces) can involve a "search for new ways of giving body to abstract forms."[4] I will argue that as something created, rather than mere ephemeral affect, *Cranford*'s charm is best understood as the successful embodiment of just such an experiment in formal representation. It compels without plot and charms without seduction. In short, *Cranford* utilizes a subtly different narrative structure—one metonymous with sympathy rather than desire. As such, this novel represents a significant moment in nineteenth-century narrative, not only in the development of the novel of sympathy but also in the novel of reform.

Since its initial publication from 1851 to 1853 in Dickens's *Household Words*, *Cranford* has charmed readers through almost two hundred editions, has been translated into several languages (including Hungarian), and has often been dramatized. During its peak years (1899–1910) the novel was published seventy-five times, and new editions continue to appear. Dickens wrote to Gaskell that many of its episodes were "delightful, and touched in the tenderest and most delicate manner."[5] Dickens's good friend John Forster wrote to Gaskell of *Cranford*: "I cannot tell you what charm the whole quiet picture has for me"; later he complimented the book for "so nice, so exquisite a touch," and he accurately predicted its great popular success.[6] Even Gaskell's lukewarm contemporary reviewers were condescendingly gal-

[3] "Story-Telling," in "Leaves from a Notebook," in *Essays of George Eliot*, ed. Thomas Pinney (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1963), pp. 444, 446.

[4] *The Rhetoric of Fiction* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1961), p. 128.

[5] Dickens, letter to Gaskell, 21 December 1851, in *The Letters of Charles Dickens, Volume Six, 1850–52*, ed. Graham Storey, Kathleen Tillotson, and Nina Burgis (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988), p. 558.

[6] John Forster, letter to Gaskell, 13 March 1852, quoted in A. B. Hopkins, *Elizabeth Gaskell: Her Life and Work* (London: John Lehman, 1952), p. 332, n. 104; and 1863 letter to Gaskell, quoted in Hopkins, p. 104.

lant. A reviewer in *Peterson's Magazine* noted that Gaskell was incapable of writing badly and thus *Cranford* was "as interesting as an almost total want of plot can make it."[7]

If in light of the novel's enduring popularity these nineteenth-century appraisals seem somewhat self-contradictory (such certain praise for such dearth of plot), this is possibly due to the fact that early readers believed that the novel's idiosyncratic structure and its charm were mutually inclusive. In 1952, in *Elizabeth Gaskell: Her Life and Work*, A. B. Hopkins neatly encapsulated this prevailing view of the novel, declaring that "*Cranford* is practically structureless, that is part of its charm" (p. 108). Of course, by dubbing *Cranford* "charming," early critics dispensed with the necessity for explaining how it is that *Cranford* delights. Since charm dissolves under scrutiny, charming works and charming women neither deserve nor reward critical attention; in fact, they are best appreciated without it.

Nineteenth-century critics explained *Cranford*'s appeal by noting that its plethora of charm compensated for its lack of plot. Twentieth-century criticism finds itself in a similarly compromised position—that of defending *Cranford* against the egregious charge of charm largely by ignoring the charge completely. Seeking to emphasize the novel's narrative strength and to defend it from charges of "plotlessness" or, even worse, lack of unity, recent appraisals have focused on the intriguing means by which the force of this novel actually does lie in its plot.[8] Other critics locate the novel's force in its presentation of character.[9] Such approaches, however, inevitably entail the regretful acknowledgment that the novel's structure is weak since its idiosyncratic relationship to formal unity is, after all, "problematic."[10] Thus, critical appraisal of the novel continues to be am-

[7] Rev. of *Cranford*, "Editor's Table," *Peterson's Magazine*, 24 (1853), 215.

[8] See Martin Dodsworth, "Women Without Men at Cranford," *Essays in Criticism*, 13 (1963), 133.

[9] Patricia Wolfe argues that *Cranford*'s structure "is based on characterization, not incident or plot" ("Structure and Movement in *Cranford*," *Nineteenth-Century Fiction*, 23 [1968], 162).

[10] A surprising number of insightful critics either explicitly or implicitly accept Dodsworth's reading that there is a critical juncture in the novel after chapter 2. Margaret Tarratt remarks that the death of Captain Brown "marks a point of rupture with the rest [of the novel], as far as the thread of story is concerned and this is an undoubted structural weakness" ("*Cranford* and 'the Strict Code of Gentility,'" *Essays in

bivalent. Yet, juxtaposed, these two centuries of criticism raise suggestive questions. If *Cranford* is plotless, then how does it captivate the reader? Conversely, if *Cranford*'s force lies in its plot, then how does this "force" operate within the novel's ostensible structural "weakness"?

Perhaps the best place to begin examining *Cranford*'s radically different narrative dynamic is at the moment of "interruption" often stressed by modern critics interested in discussing the novel's problematic lack of narrative unity—the death of Captain Brown. When on 13 December 1851 Gaskell published two episodes entitled "Our Society at Cranford" in Dickens's *Household Words*, she thought she had finished a short piece about a small fictional town named Cranford. Those episodes, though, comprise only the first few chapters of the novel as we now know it. Popular acclaim and Dickens's urging convinced Gaskell to continue the narrative, and she eventually added fourteen more chapters.[11] This continuation presented something of a challenge, since at the end of the first two episodes Gaskell had already killed off two important characters: the dynamic Captain Brown and the rather authoritarian Deborah Jenkyns. As Gaskell explained in her often-quoted letter to Ruskin: "The beginning of 'Cranford' was *one* paper in 'Household Words', and I never meant to write more, so killed Capt Brown very much against my will."[12]

In his influential essay "Women Without Men at Cranford" Martin Dodsworth uses this important fact about the novel's

Criticism, 18 [1968]: 132). Wolfe writes that the "problem of *Cranford*'s structure is central to an understanding of the book" (p. 161) and she too divides the novel into two parts which she argues should be considered holistically. Implicit in this claim, as in the claims of other critics, is the notion of a "break" in the early part of the text for which Gaskell must compensate with extra thick "unity glue." Only Andrew Horton Miller notices that such an approach cannot "explain the fragmentation within particular episodes of the text" ("The Fragments and Small Opportunities of *Cranford*," *Genre*, 25 [1992]: 97n).

[11] See Hopkins, pp. 102–6.

[12] Gaskell, letter to John Ruskin, February 1865, in *The Letters of Mrs Gaskell*, ed. J. A. V. Chapple and Arthur Pollard (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1967), p. 748.

publishing history to support his argument that there is a disruptive juncture after the death of Captain Brown, one that marks a structural flaw in the novel's narrative unity for which Gaskell only unconsciously manages to compensate in the later chapters by allowing Peter Jenkyns back to Cranford (see Dodsworth, pp 133–34). I would argue, however, that not only is *Cranford*'s publishing history an excellent metaphor for an unplanned (but nonetheless effective) escape from teleological narrative, it may also have provided the creative spur that prompted the novel's distinctive narrative pattern A brief mention of two of Gaskell's "proto-Cranford" pieces should help illustrate important strands in this pattern and also help to explain the manner in which *Cranford*, more than any other of Gaskell's novels based on Knutsford, most fully instantiates a special pattern of existence into the structure of the narrative itself.

In writing about Cranford, Gaskell was fictionally representing the real town of Knutsford, a peaceful, antiquated spot where she had lived during much of her childhood Gaskell later spent much time in the quickly growing industrialized town of Manchester (sometimes represented fictionally in her stories as "Drumble"). She describes herself as "vibrating" between these two towns, often longing to return to that peaceful childhood place to escape the pace of life in Manchester [13] In 1849 Gaskell attempted to capture some of the charm of Knutsford by writing a short nonfiction piece entitled "The Last Generation in England " She describes this attempt as an effort of historical preservation. She wanted to

> put upon record some of the details of country town life, either observed by myself, or handed down to me by older relations, for even in small towns, scarcely removed from villages, the phases of society are rapidly changing, and much will appear strange, which yet occurred only in the generation immediately preceding ours [14]

These "details" are drawn directly from Gaskell's own memories, and they include some of the more memorable events she

[13] For a more complete analysis of the importance of Knutsford in Gaskell's literary imagination, see Hopkins, pp 102–18, and Elizabeth Porges Watson, introduction to Elizabeth Gaskell, *Cranford*, ed Watson (New York Oxford Univ Press, 1972), pp vii–xii (further references to *Cranford* are to this edition and are included in the text)

[14] Gaskell, "The Last Generation in England," in *Cranford*, Appendix 1, p 161

would later rework in *Cranford* "The Last Generation" certainly contains the embryo of *Cranford's* charm, but it lacks compelling form Her later short story "Mr Harrison's Confessions" (1851) also depicts Knutsford (now "Duncombe") but this time in fictional guise In this story, Duncombe's mothers and widows comically impede the hero's romance with the angelic minister's daughter. Yet like "The Cage at Cranford," which Gaskell wrote nearly ten years after *Cranford* was published, "Mr Harrison's Confessions" derives its humor primarily from the ridiculous nature of the antiquated customs of its small-town denizens However gentle, its comic force fails to capture the sympathetic resonances so deftly incorporated within the later novel

"Our Society at Cranford," Gaskell's third significant attempt to capture the pattern of existence in Knutsford, goes well beyond the simple desire to preserve the rapidly diminishing way of life that pervades "The Last Generation " It also complicates the comic impulse that defines "Mr Harrison's Confessions" by creating a more sophisticated comic tension Perhaps by the time she wrote *Cranford* Gaskell had decided that "the Cranford people might [not] be joked about, and made fun of" (*Cranford*, p. 50), though, like the adult Peter Jenkyns, who also makes this decision, Gaskell was hardly immune to the humor in eccentricity

In her introduction to the novel Elizabeth Porges Watson has suggested that Gaskell's relationship to the town of Knutsford consisted of "a deep affection for a particular pattern of existence" (p vii) The early Cranford sketches in "Our Society" capture that pattern of existence, combining both the humor and the desire to preserve in a synthesis that transcends both The first-person narrator, Mary (who is not identified by name until the later chapters were written), sometimes speaks directly to the reader in a familiar, almost epistolary voice "Do you ever see cows dressed in grey flannel in London?" (p 5) In such asides, and throughout the story, Gaskell assumes the reader's own nuanced amusement, and her irony vibrates with full, gentle timbre The plot, such as it is, concerns a barely explained feud between Captain Brown (avid reader of Dickens) and Miss Deborah Jenkyns (respectful admirer of Dr Johnson) Gaskell's light handling of the feud, and of the vibrations caused by Cap-

tain Brown's arrival in Cranford, becomes itself the texture and compelling charm of the story. Captain Brown dies before Deborah Jenkyns can formally reconcile the feud between them, and the tension thus generated resolves itself quickly as Jenkyns helps one of Captain Brown's destitute daughters to marry a worthy, long-lost suitor.

It should be clear at this point that Dickens's proposal that Gaskell weave these sketches into a longer novel was in reality a formidable challenge to create a formal representation capable of sustaining the distinctively "charming" Cranfordian pattern of existence already so well established in the original sketches. The earlier sketches had been short enough that they could rely on the charm of Cranford's particular pattern of existence rather than any sort of traditional plot. To continue the story, Gaskell had to find a way to instantiate that pattern of existence into a longer narrative.

Mary's comments at the beginning of chapter 3, "A Love Affair of Long Ago," provide some clue to the manner in which Gaskell might have conceptualized this task. Here, Mary's connection to Cranford after the death of Deborah Jenkyns is strikingly analogous to Gaskell's relationship to the novel after realizing that she must continue a story she thought she had finished. In a narrative aside Mary comments, "I thought that probably my connection with Cranford would cease after Miss Jenkyns's death" (p. 23). Gaskell (via Mary) understands the difficulties surrounding the resumption of the Cranfordian narrative as the problem of how to maintain the relationship to Cranford itself begun in the first sketch, *not* as the problem of resuming narrative attempts at teleological plot (or, as Dodsworth would have it, of performing penance for the death of Captain Brown). Mary worries that her relationship to the town

> would have to be kept up by correspondence, which bears much the same relation to personal intercourse that the books of dried plants . . . do to the living and fresh flowers in the lanes and meadows. (p. 23)

Read as narrative allegory for Gaskell's own relationship to the text, this passage reveals an awareness of the structural difficulties posed by the deaths of her most important characters (Deb-

orah as well as Captain Brown). Gaskell could not resolve these difficulties simply by attaching a traditional narrative to the original sketches, for to have done so would have risked duplicating either the stale description of "The Last Generation" or the reductive, plot-driven humor of "Mr. Harrison's Confessions."

Gaskell seems to have solved this problem by continuing in the longer novel the nascent tendency in the earlier sketches to consistently, humorously, energetically, and creatively elude traditional linear plot. In "The Fragments and Small Opportunities of *Cranford*" Andrew Horton Miller astutely comments on *Cranford*'s unique relationship to traditional plot, noting that this novel "has eluded the appreciation of critics accustomed to considering linear stories" (p. 91). One of the few critics to specifically investigate the distinctive quality of this novel's narrative, Miller argues that *Cranford* weaves together two types of plots: the teleological plot along with a more "fragmented" form of discursiveness directed by the novel's repeated interruptions. He cites as a convergence of these two types of plots the cacophonous moment in which Mary attempts to glean information about Miss Matty's "lost" brother, Peter Jenkyns. Having suspicions that Mrs. Brown's "Aga Jenkyns" might actually be the missing Peter Jenkyns (brother to Matty and Deborah), Mary attempts to discover more information about Peter. Her initial attempts to elicit this information provoke an unwonted cacophony incapable of producing the stories necessary to her goal. Instead of conveying the information Mary wanted, "every lady took the subject uppermost in her mind, and talked about it to her own great contentment, but not much to the advancement of the subject they had met to discuss" (*Cranford*, p. 111). Miller notes that this detective impulse constitutes a traditional teleological or propulsive drive in *Cranford* that exists simultaneously with the more discursive movement of the narrative.

Since Mary's decision to follow her own propulsive detective impulse cannot sustain itself past the moment it begins, however, Mary's attempt to create a propulsive plot in Cranford might best be read in terms of its failure rather than its existence. A convergence of two distinct narrative modes necessitates the existence of both. In *Cranford*, however, propulsive plots and characters consistently vanish before they can direct

story The cacophony that this impulse produces is indicative of the fact that teleological movement toward story cannot sustain itself in Cranford The cacophony quickly resolves itself, however, once Mary abandons her momentary impulse toward traditional plot When she begins to listen with her own contentment to the subject uppermost in each lady's mind, she (and the reader) learns that the normal, patient propensity to share in the resonance of the characters whose lives one touches actually yields far more story than self-directed attempts to create stories for emotional gratification.

Mary's early reports about the town set the parameters for this Cranfordian relationship to story In Cranford "no absorbing subject was ever spoken about" (p 3) and, in fact, "there was a dearth of subjects for conversation" (p 10). When the opportunity does arise to share information, the Cranford ladies normally tell stories singly and clearly—waiting for each other to speak even when such patience requires a sacrifice. Mary and Miss Matty wait patiently for five minutes in order to allow Miss Pole to tell a piece of exciting news, despite their own "eagerness to see how [Miss Pole] would bear the information" (p 116). When Miss Pole organizes the meeting in order to inform Mary that the ladies all wish to contribute something to Miss Matty's financial support, it proceeds smoothly, broken only by a few moments of silent sobbing. Although each person present had additional important information to convey to Mary regarding her contribution, all waited until after the meeting to obtain "a private conference with" her (p 138) Like Miss Pole's "prophecies," which she only reveals after events have proved her predictions, the Cranfordian narrative habitually waits for story The inadvertent discoveries that Mary makes about the true character of the Captain and the Misses Brown, Miss Matty's secret "love affair" with Mr Holbrook, and the true nature of the Cranfordian "robberies" all occur in quiet moments not at all directed by the teleological urge to direct story toward any particular outcome As she adjusts to the rhythm of Cranford, Mary notices that neither her desires nor her suspicions can predict or interpret the actions of others. Instead, she notes, "it was only by a sort of watching that I saw how faithful [Miss Matty's] poor heart had been in its sorrow and its silence" (p 36). Mary

learns most about character, and she tells Cranford's best stories, when her own perceptivity and understanding allow her to resonate sympathetically with the town's inhabitants

It is this sympathetic resonance that defines *Cranford*'s charm and that constitutes its radically different narrative The novel's unique charm derives its essence from an innovation in the compelling dynamic of narrative that eschews traditional plotting in order to create a narrative mode that embodies a desire (more precisely, a sympathetic resonance) antithetical to seduction Insofar as it is sometimes useful to gender narrative forms, I will dub this special sympathetic resonance a "maternal" one It is a well-known fact of Gaskell's life that her husband urged her to take up writing in order to assuage her almost paralytic grief at the death of her infant son, William Thus it is possible that for Gaskell the act of writing was powerfully figured in relation to maternal emotions of love and loss The raw maternal instinct manifests itself just below the tangible outlines of plot and character, residing instead in *Cranford*'s repeated emphasis on rescuing or retrieving children Captain Brown sacrifices his life to save a child, and Mrs Brown's grueling trek across India is similarly inspired More subtly, Mrs Brown's story is itself prelude to the discovery of another child—"poor Peter," whom Miss Matty remembers only as a child, even though he returns as an aging gentleman In fact, the day he starts "looking like a man" instead of a boy (p 53), Peter disappears from Cranford, which suggests that his connection to childhood is inseparable from his connection to Cranford Miss Matty dreams of a child, and when Peter returns she is confused because she remembers him still as a child—and indeed, after his return Peter continues the practical jokes that marked his childhood career

Furthermore, the normal activities of the Cranford ladies are often markedly maternal When Miss Brown is sick the ladies divide the womanly chores of caring for her, much as they care for Signor Brunoni after his accident "Miss Pole looked out clean and comfortable, if homely, lodgings, Miss Matty sent the sedan-chair for [Mr Brown]; and Martha and I aired it well before it left Cranford" (p 103). These maternal drives even occasionally expand to fill traditionally patriarchal roles Although

she defers to her father's advice, it is Mary who invents a job for Miss Matty, and before Mary's father even arrives the Cranfordian ladies band together in order to plan for Miss Matty's financial future.

Although the importance of children, mothers, and community in many of Gaskell's works has recently received much deserved critical attention,[15] in describing Gaskell's writerly instincts as "maternal" I must stretch the denotative and connotative possibilities of the word to match Gaskell's own maternal vision. As I have shown above, traditional maternal concerns are present in *Cranford*. However, the novel is still largely about women defined by their lack of husbands and children. I am arguing, therefore, that the radical maternal drive in this novel emerges in its narrative structure, which Gaskell uses to evade conventional readerly desires (for such things as a stimulating plot or traditional romantic satisfactions) in order to respond to the needs generated by the novel's fictional characters.

Gaskell's own prescriptive advice in an 1859 letter to an aspiring young novelist is helpful here because it encapsulates an important dynamic within what I am calling Gaskell's "maternal" practice of narrative. She writes:

> I believe in spite of yr objection to the term 'novel' you do wish to 'narrate,'—and I believe you can do it if you try,—but I think you must observe what is *out* of you, instead of examining what is *in* you. ... Then set to & imagine yourself a spectator & auditor of every scene & event! Work hard at this till it become a reality to you,—a thing you have to recollect & describe & report fully & accurately as it struck you, in order that your reader may have it equally before him. (*Letters*, pp. 541–42)

This advice resembles Trollope's advice that writers let character direct plot. Gaskell's emphasis on character, however, is not

[15] See Eileen Gillooly, "Humor as Daughterly Defense in *Cranford*," *ELH*, 59 (1992), 883–910; Pauline Nestor, *Female Friendships and Communities: Charlotte Brontë, George Eliot, Elizabeth Gaskell* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985); and Nina Auerbach, *Communities of Women: An Idea in Fiction* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1978). Also extremely useful as an overview on feminist perspectives on Gaskell is Deanna L. Davis, "Feminist Critics and Literary Mothers: Daughters Reading Elizabeth Gaskell," *Signs*, 17 (1992), 507–32.

to be confused with the Trollopian stance that "the highest merit which a novel can have consists in perfect delineation of character, rather than in plot."[16] Nor is it to be confused with the writerly advice to "show rather than tell," which it also resembles. It is important that here Gaskell stresses "scene & event," without mentioning character, in order to emphasize a narrative that vibrates responsively with its subject.

Wendy K. Carse notes that "what is most striking about [Gaskell's] advice . . . is the degree to which Mary adheres to it—in reaction to the narratives of others and in her own."[17] Certainly this is true. As I have suggested, Mary's role as catalyst for story rather than director of it is not a simple rejection of teleological progression, just as Gaskell's own relationship to telling a story she thought she had finished requires a sophisticated ability to weave the small pattern into a larger representation of itself. Both achievements evolve from Gaskell's sophisticated sympathetic attention to the Cranfordian pattern of existence and to her deep maternal commitments and needs. It is this remarkable ability to explore "outside" of self that constitutes the refinement of sympathetic narrative so unique to *Cranford*. It is perhaps also responsible for Gaskell's inspired biography of Charlotte Bronte, itself an important landmark in biographical narrative. In some real sense Gaskell's biography of Bronte defined the receptive public space for the shockingly "unfeminine" author of *Jane Eyre*, who had challenged Victorian conceptions of both "woman" and "writer."

In her biography of Gaskell, Patsy Stoneman reminds us that Gaskell's education of her daughters was remarkable for its time. She notes that Gaskell's daughters were quite different in character and that Gaskell's diary attests to her interest in these differences as well as to her ability to nurture and direct their different natures through individualized parenting techniques that "allowed their natures to develop rather than imposing patterns on them."[18] This sophisticated maternal sympathy was at

[16] Anthony Trollope, *An Autobiography* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: Univ. of California Press, 1947), p. 140.

[17] "A Penchant for Narrative: Mary Smith in Elizabeth Gaskell's *Cranford*," *The Journal of Narrative Technique* 20 (1990): 321.

[18] Stoneman, *Elizabeth Gaskell* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana Univ. Press, 1987), p. 33.

work in the Brontë biography, and it also constitutes the essence of the abstract form of desire instantiated in *Cranford*'s narrative structure. Thus it is possible to say that those maternal and nonmaternal characters discussed above who act out maternal impulses represent only one rather superficial aspect of Gaskell's distinctive maternal relationship to novelistic form. More startling is the catalytic effect this maternal sympathy has on the form of the novel's narrative structure where it resists the traditional "seductive" teleological narrative, functioning instead as a metaphor for Gaskell's own parenting techniques, which employ a sophisticated form of sympathy in order to allow characters and stories to develop rather than imposing patterns on them.

In *Cranford* this sophisticated "maternal" relationship to the teleological plot gently redefines the traditional concept of novelistic unity, molding the reader's desires rather than catering to them. An important mediator between reader and story, Mary Smith dramatizes the relationship to story that is so important to the particular pattern of Cranfordian existence. Having learned from her early abortive attempt to discover more about Peter Jenkyns's whereabouts (which had provoked only a confusing cacophony), Mary decides to curb her impulse to focus story on "self" and expresses a determination

> to prove myself a model of prudence and wisdom. I would not even hint my suspicions respecting the Aga [Peter Jenkyns]. I would collect evidence and carry it home to lay before my father, as the family friend of the two Miss Jenkynses. (p. 111)

Implicit in this statement is an important conflict bearing directly on the novel's unique relationship to plot. Mary would like it to be the case that Peter Jenkyns is the same person as the mysterious Aga Jenkyns, whom Mrs. Brown discovered on her painful trek across India. Subordinating her initial desires for the exciting discovery of origins and identity, Mary here resolves to prioritize character over story. The moment marks her burgeoning understanding that her desire for story might be subordinate to some other, equally powerful impulse—the "maternal" sympathy that allows characters to develop stories themselves. Guided by this opposing desire, Mary at first decides to yield

her narrative authority to a paternal one. However, she never carries out her decision to "collect evidence and carry it home to lay before her father." Just as Captain Brown's unplanned death forestalls the traditional desire-directed plot and forces Gaskell's attention to the particular pattern of Cranfordian existence, Mary's experiences in Cranford forestall the traditional ceding of feminine authority to masculine—instead, she reconceptualizes the notion of story itself.

Gradually Mary imbibes the Cranfordian attitude toward story. Like her companions, she slowly begins to see that stories can be dangerously seductive. After all, Miss Matty believes that poor Captain Brown's avid interest in the plot of the latest issue of *Pickwick Papers* was responsible for his death. (He neglects to look up while reading when crossing the town's new railroad tracks.) He "was killed for reading," she muses sadly (p. 22). More subtly, "a most out-of-place fit of coughing" strikes Miss Pole at the moment she wishes to convey to Mrs. Forrester a piece of startling news (p. 116). Miss Pole's subsequent obsession with Signor Brunoni's exotic (fictional) origins distracts her completely from noticing that there are actually two Signor Brunonis as well as from enjoying the magical entertainment one of them offers. Likewise, "The Panic" (chapter 10) occurs directly in response to the town's willingness to suspend its normally distanced relationship to sensational stories. Defending itself from its own fictionally sensationalized stories of robberies in which "bricks [were] being silently carried away in the dead of the night" (p. 91), Miss Matty retires for the night earlier and earlier, afraid to remain awake. Another frightened Cranfordian actually places a sword under the pillow of her young servant boy in a dangerous (yet ridiculous) attempt at self-protection. This chapter veers dangerously toward the gently parodic humor of "Mr. Harrison's Confessions," revealing that Cranfordians are most misguided and least sympathetic when reading themselves into traditionally compelling plots.

It is true that Mary wonders—and wonders with real impatience—whether or not Mrs. Brown's "Aga Jenkyns" might be Miss Matty's lost brother. But she gradually comes to recognize that directive desires are incompatible with a sympathy attuned more to the desires embedded in character than to the desires

one might wish to impose from without She ruefully comments on the disjunction between the desire to tell stories and the desire to understand the lives of those she loves "I suppose all these inquiries of mine, and the consequent curiosity excited in the minds of my friends, made us blind and deaf to what was going on around us" (pp 112–13)

It is quite natural that once Mary realizes this fact, story resumes "The astounding piece of news" (p 113) that Lady Glenmire is to marry Mr Hoggins comes to light directly after Mary ceases her search for a story of her own making Indeed, Mary's "real" discoveries (Miss Matty's long-concealed love for Holbrook, the existence of the Aga Jenkyns) are each derived not from any investigative desire but rather from her patient attention to the novel's engrossing characters—the stories "uppermost" in each lady's mind as well as the emotions they experience and invoke in others Mary's sympathetic attention to the stories of others becomes itself the compelling texture of the Cranfordian narrative, which allows plot without compelling it Indeed, her discovery that the Aga Jenkyns exists (and might be the lost Peter) is dependent upon the fact that she is catalyst, not director, of Mrs Brown's story of her trek across India Acting on this new understanding, Mary sends a letter to Peter designed to tell a story only after it establishes the fact of character She hopes that this letter will "affect him, if he were Peter, and yet seem a mere statement of dry facts if he were a stranger" (p 127) Later, as Mary's understanding of the relationship between plot and character evolves still further, even this act will seem too reductively purposive and (like her earlier desire to subordinate her investigative efforts to paternal approval) too dependent upon external sources of evaluation After the meeting in which Miss Matty's friends demonstrate their unified and unselfish desire to protect Miss Matty from financial ruin, Mary senses the extent to which Cranfordians must tell their own stories·

> I began to be very much ashamed of remembering my letter to the Aga Jenkyns, and very glad I had never named my writing to any one I only hoped the letter was lost (p 146)

Her shame signals the growth of a sympathy that has learned to allow characters stories outside of self and represents the im-

portant moment at which she ceases to value Peter's character in relation to her personal desire for plot. Shortly thereafter, Cranford's lost child finally reappears.

That Peter's character emerges at the moment Mary's sympathetic engagement with Cranford is at its peak, rather than in response to her own desire for exciting discovery, may well account for the fact that Peter, not Captain Brown, is one of the few males allowed to reside in Cranford. As morally compatible as Captain Brown was with the ladies of Cranford, he was essentially out of place there. His attitude toward narrative, so humorously evident in his argument with Deborah Jenkyns over the relative merits of Dickensian and Johnsonian prose style, actually represents an insistence alien to the Cranfordian character. As his sensational death illustrates, he could not wait for story.

Indeed, despite Gaskell's celebrated lack of literary self-consciousness, the debate between Deborah Jenkyns and Captain Brown over the relative merits of Dickens and Johnson helps to elucidate certain features of *Cranford*'s sophisticated narrative structure and demonstrates at least an unconscious action on Gaskell's part to have *Cranford* occupy a narrative niche different from the literary models she clearly admired. Hilary M. Schor suggests that Gaskell uses this debate to reject both Johnson and Dickens because neither is capable of inscribing the anger or pain of female absence in a male patriarchal society.[19] No doubt Gaskell intended a distinction between Cranfordian narrative and the Johnsonian or Dickensian. However, rejection alone cannot account for the sincere regret with which Cranford (not to mention Gaskell) faces the loss of both characters—Deborah as much as the Captain.

Both Johnson and Dickens haunt this novel, and each is as important through his spiritual presence as his tangible absence. Deeply suspicious of the seductive nature of fiction, Johnson's *Rasselas* (1759) shares with *Cranford* a reliance on an es-

[19] See "Affairs of the Alphabet: Reading, Writing and Narrating in *Cranford*," *Novel* 22 (1989), 290.

sentially moral impulse to compel reader involvement in a novel with deliberately thin pretensions toward plot. In many ways Deborah Jenkyns's beloved *Rasselas* is a treatise against desire itself, revealing Johnson's deep distrust in the guiding capacity of human passions However, even as Gaskell adopts the Johnsonian ideal that plot can be driven by something other than seductive desire, she rejects Johnson's distrust of deep human feelings In "*Cranford* and 'the Strict Code of Gentility'" Margaret Tarratt perceptively argues that as the representative of Johnsonian morality, Deborah's "strict code of gentility" is actually at odds with the novel's moral center (p 155) And in fact Gaskell's rich moral imagination was probably much more closely related to Dickens than to Johnson Like Dickens, Gaskell is deeply interested in the power of sympathy and fiction to effect moral reform and to create communities

It is thus no surprise that, after Captain Brown, the next attractive male protagonist is himself almost a Dickensian character—and clearly identified with the Dickensian romantic impulse Although isolated on his farm, John Holbrook "despised every refinement which had not its root deep down in humanity" (p. 29), thus presenting the appropriate contrast to Deborah Jenkyns's more artificial code of gentility He possesses an inspired and humorous eccentric intensity—with no sense of incongruity he names "his six-and-twenty cows after the different letters of the alphabet" (p 32) He eats peas with his knife, quotes Lord Byron and Goethe, and bolts off to Paris with nary a nod toward Cranfordian normalcy

Yet Gaskell "killed" John Holbrook as abruptly as she killed Captain Brown This second startling death reveals that it is probably a mistake to read the later chapters of *Cranford* as an apology for the early death of Captain Brown As representatives of Johnson and Dickens, both Captain Brown and John Holbrook embody motives antithetical to the novel's sympathetic core Like the Captain, Holbrook is incapable of making the leap outside self in order to adapt to the pattern of conversation in Cranford, even by means of the literature he enjoys. In fact, his flaws strikingly resemble Captain Brown's By championing his favorite literature (Dickens), Captain Brown only succeeded in alienating Deborah Similarly, Holbrook does not

notice that his "old lover," Miss Matty, falls asleep while he is reading. As insistent as Captain Brown about his tastes, Holbrook lectures on the proper presentation of meals ("no broth, no ball, no beef" [p. 33]) without realizing that his guests cannot eat without proper utensils. Likewise he reads to an audience who "being forgotten" were "consequently silent" (p. 34). The ever-patient Mary Smith finds conversation with Holbrook as perplexing as conversation might be with Don Quixote himself, and Miss Pole permits his literary enthusiasm only because it allows her to better concentrate on her crochet.

Just as her affinity with Johnson is tempered by an understanding of the importance of emotion and sympathy, Gaskell's understanding of Dickensian romantic sentiment is tempered with the knowledge that sympathy, at least in part, is incompatible with romance and true attention to character. Dickens's genius created characters and plots so deeply compelling that he occasionally left himself open to Trollope's complaint in *The Warden* that the Dickensian brand of romantic sympathy actually obscures the importance of individual character.[20] The Dickensian plot not only allows characters to change due to primarily romantic influences, it often demands it.[21] In contrast, *Cranford* regretfully but doggedly blows up romantic desire "as if by gunpowder, into small fragments" (p. 29). Those romances that do flourish in *Cranford* are over quickly, and their stories lack the narrative buildup so essential to typical romance teleology. As soon as Miss Jessie's suitor appears, she is married. Similarly, the Glenmire/Hoggins courtship only gently taps the shoulders of *Cranford*'s narrative. Before the reader can turn around, the pair are already wed. And again, "A Love Affair of Long Ago," like the abrupt demise of Captain Brown, seems almost designed as an exercise in letting go of the romantic im-

[20] See Anthony Trollope, *The Warden*, ed. David Skilton (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1981), chapter 15, "Tom Towers, Dr. Anticant, and Mr. Sentiment."

[21] Bella Wilfer and Eugene Wrayburn of *Our Mutual Friend* (1864–65) are two examples since the romantic demands of this novel's plot require that both of these characters undergo transformations in their original characters in order to satisfy the demands of their successful romantic union. Bella suddenly transforms from a fairly selfish and self-centered young woman into an angel in the house, and Eugene (like many a romantic hero before and after) actually changes his entire identity.

pulse. In an unconscious imitation of Deborah's assumption that all poetry in some way evokes Dr. Johnson's eminent ideals, Miss Matty feebly compares Tennyson's poetry to Dr. Johnson's. The scene is very funny, but the humor works to explode romantic possibility. Emphasizing Holbook's incompatibility with Deborah's ideals and Miss Matty's confused attempt to conflate the value systems of those she loves, this scene underscores Miss Matty's incapacity to resonate sympathetically with the object of her own love affair. Mary's desire to read Miss Matty's relationship with Holbrook as sentimental romance explodes the seductive impulse of narrative yet again. As in the rest of *Cranford*, Gaskell here forces the reader to laughingly forgo the pleasures of a romance narrative that cannot adequately be told through the characters involved. These moments reveal the consistency with which Gaskell allows the teleological plot to emerge in *Cranford* so she can resist it. Thus in *Cranford* Gaskell hoists the impelling forces of desire from their more conventional, stable, and traditionally compelling position in plot in order to allow a narrative in which the reader resonates sympathetically with characters outside of self. Gaskell weaves her creatively "maternal" narrative influence in order to allow characters stories outside of Mary Smith's desires and outside the desires of the eager-to-be-seduced readerly self. Like Mary, the reader becomes more and more Cranfordian, participating in the rhythms of a town that understands reformative sympathy as that resonance with subject that prompts change by first admitting desire and then transforming it.

It is worth noting that Mary's moral sympathy, more complicated than Miss Matty's and more responsible for the novel's structural charm, is remarkably similar to that of George Eliot, who explores the nature of a sympathy that "feels its reverence grow in proportion to the intimacy of its knowledge."[22] It may be this very quality to which George Eliot refers when she writes to Gaskell that, even as she was attempting to formulate her own relationship to fiction, her "feeling towards Life and Art had some affinity with the feeling which had inspired 'Cranford' and

[22] George Eliot, "Worldliness and Other-Worldliness: The Poet Young" (January 1857), in *Essays of George Eliot*, p. 385.

the earlier chapters of 'Mary Barton.'"[23] In many respects, then, *Cranford* is no more a tale of provincial life than is George Eliot's *Middlemarch* (1871–72). In *Cranford* Gaskell writes with, of, and through the sympathy that George Eliot writes about.

That is a strong claim. I am arguing, however, that Gaskell's rejection of teleological narrative in *Cranford* actually represents a radical moment in the development of the novel, one perhaps more akin to a novel such as Sterne's *Tristram Shandy* (1760–67) than to any of Gaskell's nineteenth-century contemporaries. Obviously *Cranford* is not *Tristram Shandy*, but both novels do share a creative relationship to digression and sympathy that displaces the conventional, seductive teleological plot. Unlike Sterne, however, Gaskell does not simply frustrate teleological progression. She *replaces* it with a sophisticated, sympathetic resonance.

Cranford reminds us that desire is not the only structural paradigm for a narrative dynamic—novels rely on the sympathetic impulse as well. I am here "contrasting" sympathy with desire in order to render a categorical distinction that perhaps does not exist (given that the drive toward sympathy may be parallel to the drive for romance and mystery, for example). My point is not to insist that this categorical distinction is a valid one—rather I aim to distinguish sympathy from the types of desires that traditionally drive plots and, in so doing, to suggest that the desires that drive plots also play a significant role in shaping them. Readers could not identify with the characters who embody their desires without the imaginative transference that sympathy provides. I want to claim for this novel the full import of the creative energy with which Gaskell crafted a narrative form directed by this sympathetic impulse. Normally, character and sympathy are subordinate to action and desire. *Cranford*, however, reverses that hierarchy. By creating a narrative that compels the reader forward—not through desire but through sympathy—Gaskell was able to continue weaving a story whose natural trajectory had ended two chapters into itself. She was able to write the impossible: a "charming," plotless novel.

[23] George Eliot, letter to Elizabeth Gaskell, 11 November 1859, in *The George Eliot Letters*, ed. Gordon S. Haight, 9 vols. (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1954–78), III, 198.

As such, *Cranford* represents not only an important achievement in narrative but also a unique hybrid between the novel of sentiment and the novel of reform. In the eighteenth century an emerging interest in the human capacity for sympathy had produced a new kind of hero capable of transcending self-interest through sympathy alone.[24] Richardson's *Clarissa* (1747–48), Fielding's *Amelia* (1751), Sterne's *Sentimental Journey* (1768), and Mackenzie's *Man of Feeling* (1771) are but a few of the numerous eighteenth-century fictional explorations of this sympathetic sensibility. All of these novels rely more or less on their power to evoke strong emotions via the reader's capacity for experiencing the feelings felt by fictional characters. Nineteenth-century novelists, including Trollope, Dickens, Gaskell, and George Eliot, continued to explore the effects and limitations of sympathetic interactions between individual characters and the reading public, developing and refining the relationship between the novel and social reform. In a continuum of socially responsive sympathy, the deaths of Clarissa and Little Nell and the poignant defeat of Trollope's gentle warden all evoked shock waves of public reaction in order to promote increasingly specific reform agendas.

In its "charming" formal representation of the constructive interplay between plot, sympathy, and social reform, Gaskell's *Cranford* presents a twist in this reform-oriented teleology of emotional effect. Like her eighteenth-century predecessors, Gaskell locates moral worth in human sympathy, but her revision of this dynamic demanded a new relationship to affect and plot. Gaskell recognized in the concept of reform the powerful need for the kind of sympathy that she revealed for Charlotte Brontë in her biography and for the working classes in her novels of social reform. In *Cranford* she models sympathetic interaction in its very structure rather than in its subject matter. Gaskell had been accused of exacerbating class antipathies in *Mary Barton* (1848) by extending her sympathy beyond established class boundaries. With a deep sense of horror, Gaskell responded in a letter to Mary Ewart: "No one can feel more deeply

[24] See R. S. Crane, "Suggestions toward a Genealogy of the 'Man of Feeling,'" *ELH*, 1 (1934), 205–30.

than I how *wicked* it is to do anything to excite class against class, and the sin has been most unconscious if I have done so ... no praise could compensate me for the self-reproach I shall feel, if I have written unjustly" (*Letters*, p. 67). Writing *Cranford*, Gaskell was no doubt painfully refining her "indiscreet" use of sympathy just as Mary Smith refines hers as she participates in the Cranfordian story. Divorced from more obvious contexts of turbulent social reform, *Cranford* relies on the kind of sympathetic understanding that Gaskell brought to all of her novels of social reform.

Thus far, this account of *Cranford*'s special relationship to novelistic form might seem to suffer from an emphasis on formal considerations akin to those that led earlier critics of this novel astray. The argument that the problematics of *Cranford* (such as its lack of plot, its self-effacing charm, and the abrupt demise of Captain Brown) actually represent a radical and successful experiment in narrative technique has said little about *Cranford*'s relationship to the Victorian emphasis on social reform or to Gaskell's feminist agenda. The scope of this paper limits a further exploration of these important connections, but before closing I would like briefly to suggest that if it is true, as Michael McKeon states, that formal changes are necessarily and profoundly ideological,[25] then a better understanding of Gaskell's formal innovations should lead to a better understanding of this novel's full commitment to social reform of both class and gender boundaries.

Like *Cranford*'s complicated relationship to plot, which compels without compelling, Gaskell's relationship to social reform and to communities of women begins with a sympathetic understanding essentially and confidently maternal, assuming equity with the paternal and the patriarchal rather than attempting to compel it. The problem remains, of course, that insofar as *Cranford* represents an innovative approach to social reform, its very charm seems to stamp it with stultifying inconsequence. Inherent in this novel's unique narrative, however, is an attitude toward both power and convention that implies con-

[25] See *The Origins of the English Novel, 1600–1740* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1987), p. 266.

sequence to inconsequence itself. A loaded word in feminist discourse, "charm" can signify seductive power as well as an authoritative approval of those who confine their behavior within proscribed patriarchal boundaries. Critical appraisals of *Cranford*'s charm have suffered from both of these perspectives, but the novel actually participates in neither of them. By developing an alternative narrative attitude toward desire—a novel based on sympathy rather than seduction—*Cranford* transcends both perspectives creatively and sympathetically.

If in *Cranford* Gaskell offers a matriarchal community in contrast to the world of "Drumble," then perhaps she does so because she understands that the transformative power of sympathy is crucial to reform on both the personal and social level. Indeed, the creative sympathy instantiated in this novel's content and form assumes a fundamental requisite of reform: the ability to understand one world from the vantage of another. In this sense, Martin Dodsworth is absolutely right to claim that Gaskell strives to allow men back into the community at Cranford. Just as this novel without mothers or children struggles to reincorporate its "lost" child, Gaskell admits men into *Cranford* not to justify her vision but because her narrative imagination is an inclusive one. Her "charming" distance from the seduction narrative, like Cranford's distance from Drumble, does not locate her deep within the oppressed female domestic sphere, nor does it locate her in direct opposition to an authoritative patriarchy. Rather, *in order to suggest an alternative pattern of narrative and of existence*, in *Cranford* Gaskell creates a literary space that is creative and flexible enough to vibrate sympathetically between opposing poles.

University of Virginia

The Rape of Tess: Hardy, English Law, and the Case for Sexual Assault

WILLIAM A. DAVIS, JR

THE precise nature of the assault upon Tess Durbeyfield's innocence has been debated by Hardy's readers for a century. Was Tess raped, or was she seduced, by Alec d'Urberville? H. M. Daleski writes that "what happens in the Chase is . . . so ambiguously presented as to invite the mutually contradictory readings" of rape and seduction.[1] Ellen Rooney believes that "the scene of sexual violence, Tess and the female subject all appear as radically unreadable figures."[2] Kristin Brady notes that "it is in the end impossible to ascertain precisely what happened during that September night on The Chase," and that "the debate has still not been resolved with perfect clarity."[3] In a brief account of the "physical details" that Hardy added to and removed from the description of the assault in the "Fifth Edition" of 1892, Juliet Grindle and Simon Gatrell note that Hardy's changes "do not really help the reader to define for himself the nature of this consciously ambiguous happening, so much depends upon the degree of voluntary co-operation which we imagine Tess to

[1] "*Tess of the d'Urbervilles*: Mastery and Abandon," *Essays in Criticism* 30 (1980), 331.

[2] "'A Little More than Persuading': Tess and the Subject of Sexual Violence," in *Rape and Representation*, ed. Lynn A. Higgins and Brenda R. Silver (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1991), p. 97.

[3] "Tess and Alec: Rape or Seduction?" in *Thomas Hardy Annual No. 4*, ed. Norman Page (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1986), p. 131.

have offered."[4] Despite the legal implications of both seduction and rape, no one, to my knowledge, has examined the crucial rape/seduction passages of Tess from a legal perspective, specifically with reference to Victorian rape law and actual rape cases. The omission is all the more surprising when we remember that the author of the passages in question was a practicing justice of the peace during the time of the composition of *Tess*.[5] A study of Hardy's texts and their backgrounds reveals important connections to English criminal law concerning sexual assault. I would suggest that it is not "impossible," as Brady suggests it is, to determine what happens that night in the Chase, and that the descriptive details of the scene do much to "define" the "happening" that ends Phase the First of *Tess*.

The inevitable encounter between Tess and Alec is foreshadowed and anticipated from the earliest chapters of Phase the First. Hardy employs symbols and symbolic actions (e.g., the colors red and white and the virgins' dance) along with parallel scenes of penetration and violence (Alec's feeding Tess strawberries and the stabbing death of Prince) to prepare the reader for the sexual encounter of Alec and Tess. Hardy begins his description of the actual encounter as carefully as he has led up to it and with equal deliberateness:

> "Tess!" said d'Urberville.
>
> There was no answer. The obscurity was now so great that he could see absolutely nothing but a pale nebulousness at his feet, which represented the white muslin figure he had left upon the dead leaves. Everything else was blackness alike. D'Urberville stooped; and heard a gentle regular breathing. He knelt, and bent lower, till her breath warmed his face, and in a moment his cheek was in contact with hers. She was sleeping soundly, and upon her eyelashes there lingered tears.[6]

[4] Juliet Grindle and Simon Gatrell, "General Introduction," in Thomas Hardy, *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*, ed. Grindle and Gatrell (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983), p. 45. Hereafter referred to in the text as "Introduction."

[5] See Edward C. Sampson, "Thomas Hardy—Justice of the Peace," *Colby Library Quarterly*, 13 (1977), 263–74.

[6] Thomas Hardy, *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*, ed. Juliet Grindle and Simon Gatrell, p. 102. All further references to *Tess* are to this edition, unless otherwise noted, and appear in the text.

Significantly, the assault upon Tess begins with an absence of verbal communication between Tess and Alec. Tess does not respond to Alec's address, and the narrator later adds that "silence ruled everywhere around" (p. 102). Moreover, Hardy begins the actual physical encounter between Tess and Alec with the explicit statement that Tess is asleep. The physical contact is at first gentle and caressing—"her breath warmed his face, and in a moment his cheek was in contact with hers"—and this contact is followed immediately with the statement that Tess "was sleeping soundly." We may assume, then, that Tess does not communicate with Alec because she is asleep. We may further assume that Alec knows that Tess is sleeping, for he hears her "gentle regular breathing" and receives no response to his direct address.

Subsequent descriptive details—the narrator mentions Tess's absent "guardian angel," the "coarse pattern" about to be traced upon Tess, "the possibility of a retribution lurking in the present catastrophe," and the certainty that Tess's "mailed ancestors rollicking home from a fray had dealt the same measure even more ruthlessly towards peasant girls of their time" (pp. 102–3)—all suggest the violent nature of Alec's assault. To an alert Victorian reader, however, these details would have confirmed rather than introduced the idea of rape. The rape of Tess actually begins with the passage that describes Tess's sleep and her lack of verbal response—the passage, in short, that establishes her lack of consent to Alec's advances.

English law in the nineteenth century defined rape as "the offence of having unlawful and carnal knowledge of a woman by force, and against her will."[7] Mews's *Digest of English Case Law* further explains that "to constitute rape, it is not necessary that the connection with the woman should be had against her will; it is sufficient if it is without her consent."[8] The law specifically addressed several situations in which it might be assumed that a

[7] Nevill Geary, *The Law of Marriage and Family Relations: A Manual of Practical Law* (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1892), p. 480.

[8] John Mews, ed., *The Digest of English Case Law, Containing the Reported Decisions of the Superior Courts, and a Selection from Those of the Irish Courts to the End of 1897*, 16 vols. (London: Sweet and Maxwell, 1898), IV, 1,548–49.

woman had not given or could not give consent. Among these is the situation of a woman who is asleep:

> If the woman is asleep when the connection takes place, she is incapable of consent, and although no violence is used, the prisoner may be convicted of rape, if he knew that she was asleep.[9]

A review of Victorian case law shows that the courts held firmly to the idea that a sleeping or unconscious woman was incapable of consenting to a sexual relationship. *R. v. Ryan* (1846), for example, affirmed that "where a girl is in a state of utter unconsciousness, whether occasioned by the act of the prisoner, or otherwise, a person having connection with her during that time is guilty of a rape."[10] In *R. v. Mayers* (1872), Richard Mayers, the prisoner, based his defense on the argument that because the prosecutrix (his sister-in-law) did not resist his attempt at connection, he could not be found guilty of attempted rape. Justice Lush countered with an argument more firmly based in logic: "But if she was asleep it is against her will, and I shall rule that if he had, or attempted to have, connection with the woman while she was asleep he is guilty."[11] *R. v. Young* (1878), an appeal case, affirmed the conviction of the prisoner, John Young, for having connection with a married woman while she was asleep (her husband and two children were asleep next to her): "the jury found that the prosecutrix did not consent before, after, or at the time of the prisoner's having connection with her, [and] that it was against her will." Five high-ranking justices, among them Chief Justice Coleridge, had little trouble deciding that the case was "clearly one of rape."[12]

Victorian readers of the 1891 edition of *Tess* read a description of the assault scene containing specific details that would have further established the scene's legal undertones. These details may be traced to Hardy's research, much of which was legal in nature, during the decade leading up to the writing of

[9] The Earl of Halsbury, et al., eds., *The Laws of England: Being a Complete Statement of the Whole Law of England*, 31 vols. (London: Butterworth and Co., 1907–17), IX, 612.

[10] "R. v. Ryan" (1846), *Cox's Criminal Law Cases*, 2 (1848), 115.

[11] "R. v. Mayers" (1872), *Cox's Criminal Law Cases*, 12 (1875), 312.

[12] "R. v. Young" (1878), *Cox's Criminal Law Cases*, 14 (1882), 115.

Tess At some point in the early 1880s—the exact date canno determined—Hardy had recorded in his "Literary Notes II Facts" commonplace book the case of *Futcher v. Futcher* (1881 Chancery case concerning a husband's fraudulent acquisitio his wife's money on their wedding day This entry is one of m concerning points of law and actual cases reported in news pers and other sources and written down by Hardy Hardy's n entry on the Futcher case reads "*Husband, to induce* wife to ma without settlement insists on her drinking some liquid—ce mony of marriage gone through—she does not know what is doing "[13] Hardy's source was probably the *Times*, which ported the case on 29 July 1881.[14] What interested Hardy ab the Futcher case was the husband's application of spirits, ot legal issues addressed in the report of the case did not f their way into Hardy's note Moreover, we may assume that H dy made the above note on the case for possible *literary* use the notebook is entitled "Literary Notes "

Likewise, several pages later in the same notebook Ha summarizes a newspaper report of an assault case from 18 that contains facts and details very similar to those found in Chaseborough dance chapter of *Tess* (chapter 10)

> *Returned soldier*—"Exeter Assizes " Wm Dodd—35—assaul Sarah German 21st July Formerly a soldier in East Indies—fr which he returned 6 weeks since Acquired some property in In & has succeeded to some patrimony in this country Was mar the day after the offence, & was apprehended as he & his wife w leaving the Ch[urch] Sarah G —pretty girl, apparently innoc & artless, 15. Servant—Got leave from mistress to go to More Hampstead fair—abt 2 miles distant, her mother living clos the town of M H , & she was to sleep at mother s, & return to m tress at 7 in morning At the fair many hours—with another yo woman who afterw[ar]d left her At the Bell Inn there was da ing—went into dancing room—about 2 in morning saw p

[13] Literary Notes III—Facts from Newspapers, Histories, Biographies, other ch icles (mainly Local)," in *The Original Manuscripts and Papers of Thomas Hardy* (Ardsley Yorkshire EP Microform 1975), reel 9 p 19 This notebook entry and one that follows are reproduced by permission of the Trustees of Miss E A Dug and the Thomas Hardy Memorial Collection Trustees

[14] See "Futcher v Futcher " London *Times* 29 July 1881 p 4

oner there—asked her in whisper to go with him She declined also in whisper Was coming away—prisoner followed Made her drink from tumbler of spirits He came out with her & s[ai]d she sh[oul]d not go to mothers [sic] but to her master's Took her arm by force & led her in that direction Went on[war]d into fields Arrived at mistress's in morning ("Literary Notes," pp 41–42)

Possibly Hardy was influenced by his memory of this case when he came to write the dance scene in *Tess* The parallels between the Assizes case and the novel are clear each "innocent" woman attends a fair that continues late into the evening, there is a dancing room at each fair, each woman refuses the offer of an escort home, and each is ultimately led away from the fair by her persecutor Thus the dance scene in *Tess* may owe something to Hardy's reading of this 1826 case during the 1880s Hardy also records the fact that Dodd, like Mr Futcher, forces the woman to drink spirits, presumably in order to counter her anticipated resistance

In the 1891 edition of *Tess* Alec gives Tess a draught of a cordial from "a druggist's bottle" that he "held to her mouth unawares Tess sputtered and coughed, and gasping 'It will go on my pretty frock!' swallowed as he poured, to prevent the catastrophe she feared" (*Tess*, pp 100–101n) Hardy removed all reference to the cordial ("spirits" in the manuscript) for the 1892 edition "the effect," write Grindle and Gatrell, "was more to remove one of the evidences of Alec's premeditated evil intentions than to make Tess any less helpless" ("Introduction," p 45). Alec's taking Tess "unawares" with a drug is not simply an evil intention—it is a criminal act Halsbury's *The Laws of England* notes that "if a person by giving a woman liquor makes her intoxicated to such a degree as to be insensible, and then has connection with her, he may be convicted of rape, whether he gave her the liquor to cause insensibility or only to excite her" (IX, 612) This provision had been reiterated as recently as 1885 as part of the controversial Criminal Law Amendment Act of that year [15] Hardy could certainly have counted on his read-

[15] The Criminal Law Amendment Act, 1885, 48 & 49 Vict c 69 See Part I, section 3 3

ers' familiarity with the law in 1891, but he apparently preferrec to tone down the criminal aspects of the assault after 1892 The effect was to make the assault in the Chase look less like rape

Such laws and case rulings suggest that the courts woulc have interpreted Tess's situation as a case of rape Why, then does Hardy keep Tess away from an apparently sympathetic ju dicial system? (Only in the *Graphic* serial version of the novel dc Tess and her mother consider, and then quickly dismiss, prose cution as an answer to the mock marriage arranged by Alec)[16] One explanation may be that Hardy wished to raise this very question in the minds of readers in order to remind them o the status of working-class women and their relation to the law As Joan Perkin points out, "working-class women were almos wholly beyond the reach of the civil law " With their lack of re sources and legal "know-how," women were effectively outside the scope of the law.[17] The passage of the Criminal Law Amend ment Act of 1885—entitled "An Act to make further provisior for the Protection of Women and Girls"—suggests that the crim inal law was similarly ineffective in helping women Tess may simply not know how to proceed against Alec legally because she understands neither the law nor her place in it Her lack o understanding is made explicit later in the book when her hus band tells her, during a discussion of divorce, "You don't under stand the law—you don't understand!" (p 337) Tess is appar ently as removed from the law as she is from her irresponsible "guardian angel " She cannot seek help from a legal system tha she apparently knows nothing about.

Moreover, with the beginning of Phase the Second, Hardy replaces his earlier focus upon sexual assault with a new focus

[16] Hardy changed the rape/seduction of the novel version to a tamer mock mar riage for the *Graphic* serial version of 1891 In the serial version Mrs Durbeyfield briefly entertains the thought of prosecuting Alec for his clever trick in making Tes think she has gone through the ceremony of marriage before a registrar (who turn out to be a friend of Alec s masquerading as a registrar) Mrs Durbeyfield's statement "But he can be prosecuted for this" (p 115n)—"this' meaning mock marriage rathe than rape—is, in fact, correct, and it further establishes Hardy's knowledge of Victo rian law See my "'But he can be prosecuted for this Legal and Sociological Back grounds of the Mock Marriage in Hardy's Serial *Tess*," *Colby Library Quarterly*, 25 (1989) 28–41

[17] See Perkin, *Women and Marriage in Nineteenth-Century England* (London Rout ledge, 1989), p 115

on seduction and on Tess's complicity in a sexual relationship of several weeks' duration. Seduction, rather than rape, becomes the main foundation for the remainder of the plot. In his personal comments on the novel Hardy tended to emphasize the seduction rather than the sexual assault that precedes it. For example, in a letter written in 1891 to thank Thomas Macquoid for his praise of the serial *Tess*, Hardy refers to the seduction (but not the rape) of Tess in the forthcoming volume edition: "Clare's character [in the serial] suffers owing to a mock marriage having been substituted for the seduction pure & simple of the original MS.—which I did for the sake of the Young Girl. The true reading will be restored in the volumes."[18] Thus, Hardy saw seduction as a major part of the "true reading" of *Tess*.

Seduction has mainly moral implications, while rape has mainly legal ones. Hardy, I believe, wanted Tess's sexuality and the matter of her purity to be considered in the minds of his readers rather than argued (with perhaps predictable results) in a fictional court of law.[19] To have Tess's status as "pure" victim following the rape amplified in a court scene would perhaps settle the question of her purity too easily, and Hardy does not want that. Instead, he uses the expansiveness afforded by the novel form (rather than a single scene) to argue for a definition of female purity that includes Tess's sexual nature and her sexual responses to men. The sexual assault so carefully fore-

[18] Thomas Hardy, letter to Thomas Macquoid, 29 Oct. 1891, in *The Collected Letters of Thomas Hardy*, ed. Richard Little Purdy and Michael Millgate, 7 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978–88), I, 245–46.

[19] Peter J. Casagrande suggests that the "inexplicability" of the rape scene may be traced to Hardy's refusal *to be constrained* by "doctrines" and "norms." Casagrande's interpretation goes on to anticipate my own: "To explain why rather than to ask why would also enclose the entire issue in the accepted philosophical and theological doctrines of his times. But Hardy's originality in *Tess* lies precisely in his refusal to adopt constraining norms, whether artistic or theological. His creative courage rests in his determination to diverge from what had come before. He chooses not to judge Tess and her violators, for then he would be simply telling a moral tale" (see *Tess of the d'Urbervilles: Unorthodox Beauty* [New York: Twayne Publishers, 1992], p. 55). I would add that Hardy's keeping Tess out of the legal system following the rape enables him to lay the groundwork for a moral debate rather than a legal one, while the descriptions establish the fact that a sexual assault has indeed taken place. These descriptions and the subsequent allusions to seduction serve to open and guide—and complicate—the discussion of Tess's sexuality, whereas recourse to the legal system would, to borrow Casagrande's term, "enclose" it.

shadowed, described, and revised by Hardy all but disappears from the plot after Phase the First. Its implicit return occurs in Phase the Seventh, when Tess murders Alec with a knife. The murder and the weapon used complete the unfinished business of the earlier assault (Hardy suggests the validity of such a reading with the title "Fulfilment"). Violent penetration answers violent penetration, crime answers crime. Hardy brings the violent relationship of Tess and Alec to a "legal" conclusion with the execution of Tess.

Thus Hardy's statement concerning "seduction pure & simple" is not necessarily inconsistent with an interpretation of rape if we think of the incident in the Chase as a rape that is closely followed by a second event, this one a seduction. One kind of mastery follows another. Hardy suggests the presence of these two kinds of mastery, and of this very sequence, in the narrator's summary of Tess's report to her mother in Phase the Second: "[Tess] had dreaded him, winced before him, succumbed to adroit advantages he took of her helplessness, *then*, temporarily blinded by his ardent manners, had been stirred to confused surrender awhile" (p. 117; emphasis added). Hardy is describing two stages—and very likely two events—in the relationship of Alec and Tess, with the all-important "then" signaling the end of one stage and the beginning of the next. In a passage that follows shortly after this one, one of the fieldworkers at Marlott speaks of this first event in words that strongly support an interpretation of rape while differentiating rape from seduction ("persuading"): "A little more than persuading had to do wi' the coming o't [of Tess's child], I reckon. There were they that heard a sobbing one night last year in The Chase; and it mid ha' gone hard wi' a certain party if folks had come along" (p. 127).

As I have suggested, Hardy's writing (and rewriting) of the first of these events—the assault upon Tess in Phase the First—grew out of his knowledge of English rape law. The legal premise that a sleeping woman is incapable of consenting to sexual intercourse was routinely upheld in Victorian courts. A sleeping woman's "purity"—purity in the sense that she cannot consent to a sexual relationship and her will cannot be known—is beyond question in the eyes of the law; therefore Hardy turns his attention from rape to seduction and to the more com-

plicated question of Tess's purity as an apparently consenting woman. The same law provides an answer to Alec's use of intoxicating liquor in the 1891 edition and in the manuscript, but, again, Alec's forcing Tess to drink against her will perhaps too easily establishes her status as "pure" victim. In the *Graphic* serial version Hardy alludes to other laws designed to protect women from men like Alec with Joan Durbeyfield's threat to prosecute Alec for arranging a sham marriage, but Hardy stops short of letting Joan's threat proceed to actual prosecution. Although Hardy revised the scenes describing the early relationship of Alec and Tess for different versions of the novel, he maintained an interest in the legal foundations of that relationship.

As a practicing justice of the peace, Hardy would have had some knowledge of these important laws and their history. To share Hardy's knowledge is to appreciate the foundation of the sexual relationship of Tess and Alec. If the references to sleep and the administering of spirits are instances of Hardy's use of his legal knowledge—and I think they are—then we must conclude that Hardy thought of the event in the Chase as a rape. Alec's brutal mastery of Tess through rape makes possible his subsequent mastery of her through seduction. Hardy wants the equation to read a particular way: Tess is seduced because she was raped. Thus Hardy must describe the rape in some way, even though in doing so he will lessen Tess's status as victim somewhat and thus postpone the discussion of her purity. So he removes the reference to intoxicating liquor. The remaining fact that Tess is asleep adds to the pattern of references to sexual assault begun in the novel's earliest chapters. In an otherwise perceptive reading of this pattern of references, Kristin Brady concludes that "the question of whether Tess was raped or seduced by Alec d'Urberville" may represent "reductive thinking about sex" and may, after all, be quite beside the point (pp. 144–45). It is difficult, however, to dismiss this pattern of rape followed by seduction, or Hardy's research into the law during the 1880s that is recorded in his notebooks, or his writing and rewriting of the scene over a period of years. His revisions to the scene modify rather than cancel the evidence for sexual assault, evidence that is subtly woven into the narrative and is crucial to our understanding of the scene. It is, moreover, evi-

dence upon which Victorian rape law was partly based and upon which convictions were upheld An English court would have found much that is potentially criminal in Alec's assault upon the sleeping Tess Hardy's readers can find in the rape of Tess the crucial event that prepares the way for her seduction and a central moment that establishes her purity, a purity that remains even after she is "stirred to confused surrender "

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Howells and Norris: A Backward Glance Taken

JESSE S. CRISLER

THE early assessment by Herbert Edwards of the relationship between William Dean Howells and Frank Norris remains typical of subsequent critical treatment of it in both intention and accuracy:

> Howells was among the first who found a 'new thrill' in *McTeague*, and was probably the first to say so in print. Howells was largely instrumental in bringing Norris into public notice, although he had never had an opportunity of meeting him personally. It was Howells's favorable notice of Norris which had brought the young author to the attention of McClure [. . .] and which thus paved the way for Norris's later fame. When Norris died suddenly in 1902, Howells wrote the first essay of appreciation which appeared after his death.[1]

Edwards rightly places Norris amid the scores of young writers whom Howells graciously advanced through his generous reviews of their work published in salient literary journals, his personal encouragement of their art dispensed during chatty visits, and his sage advice concerning their plans proffered in earnest interviews. Like many critics, Edwards seeks to cast Norris as but one more protégé of America's "dean" of letters, mainly through

[1] "Howells and the Controversy over Realism in American Fiction," *American Literature*, 3 (1931), 248.

conjectures rather than facts Of course, Howells did recognize the power of *McTeague* (1899), as his 24 March 1899 review in *Literature* indicates, but to say that this review was "probably the first" positive notice of the novel stretches a point: at least sever reviews, each quite favorable to *McTeague*, antedated Howells's some by as much as almost three weeks [2] Edwards correctly con tends that Howells's efforts first brought Norris to the attentio of the reading public, provided that one understands "publi notice" to mean eastern, for Norris had enjoyed a reputation in San Francisco as a savvy ironist for more than two years befor his arrival in New York in early 1898 Nor did "Howells's favor able notice of Norris" lead young publishing phenomenon S S McClure to hire him Norris had worked for McClure's for nearl a year before Howells extolled the virtues of *Moran of the Lad Letty* (1898) in print.[3] The inaccessibility of Norris's letters per haps explains Edwards's erroneous statement that the two au thors never met, on the other hand, Howells himself recalle discussions between them in his famous eulogy "Frank Norris (written three decades before Edwards's article), which Ed wards specifically refers to as "the first essay of appreciation" af ter Norris's death—another exaggerated glossing, since a tid of tributes to Norris rushed forth beginning the day after h died [4] By viewing Norris as a minor planet orbiting the Howells ian sun, Edwards thus ignores not only truth but also the possi bility that the gravitational pull in this literary solar system, fa from being as totally one-sided as he depicts, may actually hav been mutual

While some later criticism—such as Edwin H. Cady's fulle account of relations between the two authors in his rich *The Real ist at War* (1958) or Rodrigue E Labrie's intensive examinatio "The Howells-Norris Relationship and the Growth of Natural

[2] See Howells, "A Case in Point" *Literature*, n s 11 (24 March 1899) rpt in *Fran Norris The Critical Reception*, ed Joseph R McElrath, Jr , and Katherine Knight (Ne York Burt Franklin, 1981), pp 39–41 McElrath and Knight also reprint the seve earlier reviews of *McTeague* and two briefer notices (pp 29–39)

[3] Howells reviewed *Moran of the Lady Letty A Story of Adventure off the California Coa* (1898) surprisingly favorably in "American Letter Some Recent Novels" *Literatur* 3 (1898) 577–78

[4] See W D Howells, "Frank Norris," *North American Review*, 175 (1902), 769–78

ism"[5]—has constructed fuller and more accurate evaluation of the interplay between the two, many scholars neglect its implications in Norris's work, and none seems to have considered its hesitant beginning when Norris discovered Howells or its faltering end when, after Norris's untimely death, Howells continued to champion one of his favorites. A review of their literary acquaintanceship from commencement to conclusion redresses both past inequities and uninformed conjectures, by charting a more layered, complicated, and significant connection than has been previously indicated.

The first chapter of their intercourse opens during Norris's student days at Berkeley, when he owned at least two volumes by Howells, *The Albany Depot* (1892) and *The Mouse-Trap* (1894), demonstrating an early interest in Howells that is confirmed by one of his surviving Harvard student themes, submitted 28 February 1895 to his creative-writing class taught by Lewis E. Gates.[6] At work on both *Vandover and the Brute* (1914) and *McTeague* at Harvard, Norris frequently culled material from class assignments for later inclusion in both novels. In the story submitted on 28 February 1895, for example, Trina justifies her taste in paintings at an art gallery by asserting, "Of course . . . I'm no critic. I only know what I like," a declaration reminiscent of Silas Lapham's smug pronouncement to Bromfield Corey regarding his own artistic predilections: "I don't set up to be a judge of pictures, but I know what I like."[7] While a single sentence or two does not clinch *The Rise of Silas Lapham* (1885) as a source for *McTeague*, when considered along with Norris's vari

[5] See Edwin H. Cady, *The Realist at War: The Mature Years, 1885–1920, of William Dean Howells* (Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse Univ. Press, 1958), and Rodrigue E. Labrie, "The Howells-Norris Relationship and the Growth of Naturalism," *Discourse: A Review of the Liberal Arts*, 11 (1968), 363–71.

[6] Jesse S. Crisler, "Norris's Library," *Frank Norris Studies*, No. 5 (Spring 1988), 1–5, notes the presence of both *The Albany Depot* and *The Mouse-Trap* among the volumes in Norris's library.

[7] William Dean Howells, *The Rise of Silas Lapham*, ed. Walter J. Meserve, vol. 12 of *A Selected Edition of William Dean Howells* (Bloomington: Indiana Univ. Press, 1971), p. 205. Among several student themes of which Norris incorporated parts in both *Vandover and the Brute* and *McTeague* is that dated 28 February 1895, now part of the Frank Norris Collection, The Bancroft Library, Univ. of California, Berkeley.

ous critical analyses of Howells's work in the San Francisco *Wave* over the next two years, it does underscore his admiration for the near-legendary older novelist

The first of these analyses, "Our Unpopular Novelists," which appeared on 5 October 1895, numbers Howells as one of several "staple" American authors, more telling, Norris's list includes only Howells and one other realist, Harold Frederic, while four popular romantic novelists—F. Marion Crawford, Thomas Nelson Page, Lew Wallace, and Richard Harding Davis—complete it [8] Querying why American readers prefer to buy English novels, Norris supplies a probable answer by relegating writers to certain "'schools,'" readers limit their sales He deplores the "invention" of such restrictive terms as "'romanticism,' 'realism,' [and] 'naturalism,'" naively insisting that "human nature is the same no matter whether one regards it with the eyes of a romanticist, a realist, or a naturalist" ("Our Unpopular Novelists," p. 25) Already attempting to formulate a viable theory of fiction, one that rejects labels in favor of aesthetics—"If the book is good, it is good whether it is *Ivanhoe, The Rise of Silas Lapham*, or *La Bête Humaine*" (p. 26)—in his first excursion into literary criticism Norris elevates Howells to a select pantheon, even though he simultaneously resists exploring the criteria governing his choices.

No such timidity informs "Theory and Reality," published six months later, in which Norris reviews Howells's *A Parting and a Meeting* (1896) and Mrs Jarboe's *Robert Atterbury* (1896), forcefully articulating why Howells emerges as the "greater author" Howells "touches" his subject "lightly, delicately, handling it with the greatest subtlety and finesse", he "tells a story," while Jarboe "develops a theory", he exhibits an enviable ability to portray believable characters who "interest his readers," causing them to "forget Howells at once in the fortunes of his dramatis personae", and, as a purveyor of "real life," Howells evinces a solid understanding of fiction that "should tell a real story, of

[8] Norris, "Our Unpopular Novelists Disappearance of American Fiction from the Book Stores," *Wave*, 14 (5 October 1895), rpt in *The Literary Criticism of Frank Norris* ed Donald Pizer (Austin Univ of Texas Press, 1964), p 25

real people and of real places," while Jarboe bludgeons her reader with moralistic idealism.[9]

Still, as Joseph R. McElrath, Jr., and Douglas K. Burgess perceptively observe, as much as he admired Howells's coverage of "the 'ultimate physical relation of man and woman'" ("Theory and Reality," p. 161), Norris never patterns his own treatment of sex after Howells.[10] Comments in the next *Wave* essay mentioning Howells partially explain how Norris on the one hand could revere Howells as the consummate realist and on the other hand see him less as an example to emulate than as an interesting virtuoso. One of Norris's best-known essays, "Zola as a Romantic Writer," appeared on 27 June 1896, two months after "Theory and Reality." Initially continuing his paean to Howells, whose "characters live across the street from us. . . . We know all about them, about their affairs, and the story of their lives,"[11] Norris abruptly ceases his encomium by accusing Howells of too much circumspection in scrupulously avoiding any hint of the lurid (see McElrath and Burgess, introduction, I, xxxiv). Ironically, the master realist, the accomplished depicter of "the smaller details of every-day life . . . small passions, restricted emotions, dramas of the reception-room, tragedies of an afternoon call, crises involving cups of tea," earns but grudging praise from his erstwhile acolyte, who now turns his allegiance to Zola, a "naturalist" rather than a "realist," concerned not with the "*ordinary*" but with the "individual" and the "unique" ("Zola," p. 71). A further irony, through an odd quirk in Norris's developmental logic, is that naturalism becomes "a form of romanticism, not an inner circle of realism," and Norris, previously chiding the reading public for consigning writers to artificial "schools," blithely places Zola in naturalism, "a school by itself, unique, somber, powerful beyond words" ("Zola," p. 72).

Perhaps because he recognized the theoretical quagmire

[9] Norris, "Theory and Reality: An Old Author and a New Writer Consider the Same Problem," *Wave*, 15 (2 May 1896), rpt. in *Literary Criticism*, pp. 161–62.

[10] See Joseph R. McElrath, Jr., and Douglas K. Burgess, introduction to *The Apprenticeship Writings of Frank Norris, 1896–1898*, ed. McElrath and Burgess, 2 vols. in 1 (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 1996), I, xxx.

[11] Norris, "Zola as a Romantic Writer," *Wave*, 15 (27 June 1896), rpt. in *Literary Criticism*, p. 71.

into which he had wandered, Norris remains silent on Howells for several months—nor does his next reference occur in the *Wave*. Instead, a series of essays by Bailey Millard in the San Francisco *Examiner* on "The Great American Novel" finds Norris positing Howells's *A Modern Instance* (1882) as "the best interpretation of American life."[12] Norris's letter to the *Examiner*, the first exploration of the writer's craft in his correspondence, discloses several important aspects of a literary credo he was currently developing for the still-unfinished *McTeague*.[13] To Norris, for instance, Howells's novel "is great because it is true, relentlessly and remorselessly true to American life" (Millard, p. 30), so in *McTeague* one encounters characters whom one may not know but who one knows exist, and whose lives, sordid though they may appear, eventually matter to the reader as variations from the commonplace. Norris praises Howells for "conceiv[ing] of some . . . great crying evils of Americanism . . . the problems of politics, of divorce, . . . of marriage, and of social caste," just as *McTeague* considers similar ills: bad marriages, inner-city politics, poor minorities, and social inequities. Howells also writes "with a consistency and a plausibleness that are convincing"; *McTeague* is likewise believable. Finally, Norris lauds Howells's "thorough technical knowledge of the novelist's trade" (Millard, p. 30); like Howells, Norris himself deftly reduces the real to the fictive in *McTeague*. Strong as his approval of Howells is here, however, it is not unqualified (see McElrath and Burgess, introduction, I, xxxiv–xxxv): while the realistic *A Modern Instance* ranks "among the masterpieces of fiction," Norris declares popular writer Lew Wallace's *Ben-Hur* (1880) "the best novel yet produced by an American author" (Millard, p. 30).

In the *Wave* for 22 May 1897, Norris's "An Opening for Novelists" discloses Howells's one-time disciple in further retreat. Cursorily noting Howells's Boston in a list of cities made famous by selected authors who wrote about them, Norris

[12] Frank Bailey Millard includes Norris's letter, which advances Howells's *A Modern Instance* (1882) as a candidate for "The Great American Novel," in "What Is Our Greatest Piece of Fiction: Romance Readers Discuss the Matter Learnedly and Interestingly," San Francisco *Examiner*, 17 January 1897, p. 30.

[13] See *Frank Norris: Collected Letters*, ed. Jesse S. Crisler (San Francisco: Book Club of California, 1986), p. 38.

laments the absence of such an advocate for San Francisco. One wonders whether Norris conceives of himself as the answer to his plaintive "who shall be our Kipling?" and if his dismissal of "fine writing"—"we don't want literature, we want life"—is not a veiled abandonment of Howells, who definitely was not a Kipling.[14]

Norris's last reflection on Howells in the *Wave*, "Scene Mounting of the Future," printed in the 25 December 1897 issue, briefly compliments his former model, which suggests that while Norris's love affair has not ended, certainly his ardor has cooled. Again Norris applauds Howells's novels where "things" occur "exactly as they have happened in real life," unlike the "ridiculous" staging of current plays that demand an unwilling suspension of disbelief from their audiences.[15] So ends the first chapter of the Norris-Howells saga, a relationship so decidedly singular at this point that half of it knew nothing of the other, yet so significant to Norris that the very existence of both Howells and his work played an immeasurable role in helping him assemble a working, albeit a confusing and inconsistent, theory of fiction.[16]

[14] Norris, "An Opening for Novelists: Great Opportunities for Fiction Writers in San Francisco," *Wave*, 16 (22 May 1897), rpt. in *Literary Criticism*, pp. 29–30.

[15] Norris, "Scene Mounting of the Future," *Wave*, 16 (25 December 1897), rpt. in *Apprenticeship Writings*, II, 237, 236.

[16] Though Howells as yet presumably knew nothing of Norris, *A Hazard of New Fortunes* (1890) discloses an easy familiarity with precisely the sort of young man Norris was at the time. For example, Basil March trenchantly describes "the international shabbiness" on the South side of Washington Square which has "broken it up into lodging-houses, shops, beer-gardens, and studios" (*A Hazard of New Fortunes*, ed. David J. Nordloh et al., vol. 16 of *A Selected Edition* [Bloomington: Indiana Univ. Press, 1976], pp. 55–56), a kind of ironic foreshadowing of the Square that Norris would know nearly a decade later when he actually takes up residence in rooms on "Washington Sq. S." (see Norris, *Letters*, pp. 65ff.). Another character in *Hazard*, Mrs. Grosvenor Green, decides "to pursue her art studies in Paris," where "the instruction was so much better" (p. 73), a further example of art unintentionally mirroring life, since Norris had just completed his own study at the Julian Academy, where he went for reasons very similar to Mrs. Green's, since Norris's mother, taken with his apparent talent, deemed San Francisco, and even London, unsuitable to advancing her son's artistic abilities (see William B. Dillingham, *Frank Norris: Instinct and Art* [Lincoln: Univ. of Nebraska Press, 1969], pp. 7–8). Finally, another artist in *Hazard*, Angus Beaton—who among other skills plays the banjo, currently "all the rage"—undertakes to teach its rudiments to Christine Dryfoos (*Hazard*, p. 230); like Beaton, Norris, in 1890 still an aspiring artist, also plays the banjo for fraternity friends. Thus while Howells had not met Norris, he certainly "knows" him.

Greater complexity surrounds the seconc installment of relations between Howells and Norris Not onl does Norris continue to refer to Howells in his essays, but How ells returns the favor, further, the authors meet, they corre spond, and Norris's work overtly reflects Howells's influence Or 7 March 1898, soon after Norris's arrival in New York, Gelet Burgess, a longtime California friend himself recently relocatec in New York, introduced Norris to Howells In a letter to anothe friend in California, Mrs Elizabeth Hewitt Davenport, Norris re ports the satisfaction the visit afforded him That he informs he that Howells was "one of the most delightful men imaginable comes as no surprise (Norris, *Letters*, p 48), not only because o his known regard for Howells's work but also because, i Franklin Walker is correct, Howells generously "offered to reac the manuscript of *McTeague*," a coup for one as inexperiencec as Norris then was [17] In a 13 March 1898 letter to yet anothe California friend, Harry Manville Wright, classmate at Berkeley fraternity pal, and fellow participant in college dramatics, Nor ris half-mockingly acknowledges his mounting debt to Howell as once and continuing mentor by justifying his use of the worc "protagonist" in an otherwise breezy and gossipy letter "Mr W D Howels [*sic*] he gimme that word" (Norris, *Letters*, p 50).[1]

Several months later, favorably reviewing *Moran* as hi "American Letter" in the British periodical *Literature*, Howell reciprocates Norris's gratitude by thanking him "for some rapic

[1] Franklin Walker *Frank Norris A Biography* (Garden City, N Y Doubleday Dorai 1932) p 170

[18] Burgess's recollection of the evening reveals that, despite the young writer presumed awe of his esteemed older colleague, nothing daunted his delight in practi cal jokes, an aspect of his personality that *Blix* (1899) definitely but other novels a well amply disclose Burgess wrote 'Frank called for me that evening at my apartmen on Washington Square and found me dressing—we were to call in evening dress H watched me dress with that ironic devilish smile of his on his lips all the while It wa not until we had been in Mr Howells drawing room for almost an hour that I discov ered to my horror that instead of having put on my tail coat I had by inadvertence pu on my cutaway coat with my evening vest and trousers Frank had known it all the time and had said nothing to me, letting me make a fool of myself, and enjoying my embar rassment and mortification to the full' (qtd in Walker p 170)

passages of time" ("American Letter," p. 578). He discovers "a good deal of reality" in Ross Wilbur, Captain Kitchell, and the Chinese cooks, stating that "the story gains a certain effectiveness from being so boldly circumstanced in the light of common day," high praise indeed for what Howells terms a "romanticistic story." Howells, unaware of Norris's confusion over Howells's place in his personal literary canon, thus confers almost instant fame on a newcomer, whose "fresh and courageous invention" rewards the reader well ("American Letter," p. 578). Howells's preference for *Moran*, a "San Francisco romance," over Will Payne's *The Money Captain* (1898), a "Chicago novel" and the companion subject of Howells's review ("American Letter," p. 578), also unintentionally echoes Norris's ridicule of Chicago as an effective setting in "An Opening for Novelists," in which Norris contemptuously exclaims, "Imagine a novel of Chicago" ("Opening," p. 28). Such praise from America's "dean" doubtless pleased Norris, as would the repetition of phrases from Howells's review in a subsequent announcement in *Literature* of the publication of *Shanghaied*, which Norris's English publisher, Grant Richards, had retitled *Moran*: "We welcome the arrival in England of this romantic story, over which Mr. Howells . . . confessed to have 'gasped in the crucial moments.'"[19]

Precisely two weeks after Howells's review appeared, Norris wrote to thank him, in a letter dated 31 December 1898, for the "good things" he said and what he was "kind enough to refrain from saying" (Norris, *Letters*, p. 60). Admitting the faults Howells had catalogued, Norris excuses himself for "showing off" and seeks Howells's advance support of *McTeague*. In this letter, as elsewhere, Norris also continues to dabble at constructing demarcations between fictional genres, for *McTeague*, he claims, "is as naturalistic as Moran was romantic" (Norris, *Letters*, p. 60), a comparison that only muddies already cloudy waters, for not even Norris could imagine that *Moran* conformed to the whimsical definition of Zolaesque romanticism he had earlier proposed in "Zola as a Romantic Writer."

[19] See Howells, "Some Sporting Stories," *Literature*, 4 (1899), 347, which notes the forthcoming publication of *Shanghaied: A Story of Adventure on the Californian Coast* (London: Grant Richards, 1899).

Once planted, the Norris-Howells friendship blossomed, as another letter to Mrs. Davenport, dated 22 March 1899, plainly illustrates. Howells had "been very good to" Norris that "winter" (Norris, *Letters*, p. 68). This letter also presages Norris's imminent departure to California to begin researching *The Octopus*: "I was talking to Mr. Howells . . . and he rather encouraged me to do my work wherever the surroundings were most congenial, and told me that as soon as I had 'once established my connections' in New York there was no reason why I could not 'go home' and that a 'literary' man could do his work anywhere" (Norris, *Letters*, p. 68). Howells's advice here contextualizes Norris's later declaration in his syndicated essay "New York as a Literary Center" that "wherever there is a table and quiet, there the novel may be written," as well as his even stronger decree in the third number of his "Salt and Sincerity" series (in the *Critic*, June 1902) that "the best work in the production of good fiction is done in the closet and not on the housetop"; creativity flourishes just as easily in rural Colorado "as in New York," if not better, "for from the little isolated village of the Rocky Mountains one gets a perspective upon the outside world impossible to attain in the world itself."[20] Ironically, though both authors wrote their best work in the heady atmosphere of urban centers, Norris apparently accepted Howells's dictum wholeheartedly in theory.

With typical self-deprecation, in this same letter Norris also notes that Howells had "been kind enough to call *McTeague* 'a great novel' [and] . . . reviewed it somewhere" (Norris, *Letters*, pp. 68–69). The review that Norris refers to, Howells's startling affirmation in "A Case in Point," is seminal to criticism of the novel. Among other compliments it terms *McTeague* "altogether a remarkable book," clearly indebted to Zola for "a certain epical conception of life" ("Case," p. 39). Astute as always, Howells here draws on his vast knowledge of Continental realism in recognizing the influence of that legacy on a younger contemporary and proposing Zola as the reason for a "lingering love of

[20] Norris, "New York as a Literary Center," in his *The Responsibilities of the Novelist and Other Literary Essays* (New York: Doubleday, Page, 1903), rpt. in *Literary Criticism*, p. 30, and Norris, "Salt and Sincerity [III]," *Critic*, 40 (1902), rpt. in *Literary Criticism*, p. 201.

the romantic" present in *McTeague* ("Case," p 39)—which Norris must have felt indicated a kindred spirit, given his own perverse insistence on Zola's romanticism Commending myriad aspects of the novel, among them characterization, detail, form, texture, and color, Howells does chide Norris in one respect.

> Mr Norris has . learned his lesson well, but he has not learned it all His true picture of life is not true, because it leaves beauty out Life is squalid and cruel and vile and hateful, but it is noble and tender and pure and lovely, too. By and by he will put these traits in, and then his powerful scene will be a reflection of reality ("Case," p 40)

Whether Norris desired his writing to reflect reality is moot, certainly, if he wanted to picture the kind of life that varies from the norm, *McTeague* amply succeeds Though Norris thanked Howells, once again by letter (28 March 1899), for a review that "pleased and delighted" him and that "encouraged" him "more than anything that has ever been said of" his talent, he temporized Howells's objection to *McTeague*'s ending as an "anti climax," assuring him that it had "its place" (Norris, *Letters*, p 73) Understandably, neither writer noted Norris's ostensible debt to Howells himself in *McTeague*: incorporating his earlier student theme, Norris describes the McTeagues' expedition to a local art gallery where, as in his student essay, Trina avers, "I'm no critic, I only know what I like "[21] Much earlier in the novel (pp 67–68), at the inception of their courtship, Trina and McTeague accompany her family to Schuetzen Park Walking along a deserted railroad track they engage in a wildly unlikely conversation based on comic non-sequiturs, which bears a sharp resemblance to a *tête-à-tête* that occurs in *The Rise of Silas Lapham* (pp. 111–13) between Tom Corey and Irene Lapham over current literature The two situations are disparate, of course, but the freshness of the characters and the incongruities of their innocent responses to each other are too parallel to be overlooked as evidence of Howells's probable influence on Norris

[21] *McTeague* (New York Doubleday and McClure, 1899), pp 197–98

The bulk of Norris's letter outlines his plan for a trilogy of novels based loosely on the production, distribution, and consumption of wheat. His hope that the result will be "distinctly American" (Norris, *Letters*, p. 73) foreshadows his later praise of Howells in "An American School of Fiction" as the national writer with "the broadest vision."[22] Duly appearing two years later, *The Octopus* (1901) suggests, according to Lars Åhnebrink, that Norris had benefited from "Howells' advice to bring in light and beauty, for [it is] . . . more humane and lighter in tone and touch than the gloomy and depressing *McTeague*."[23] Meanwhile, Norris capitalized on his increasing fame by marketing himself as a pithy pundit through several series of essays in leading newspapers. In "Literature in the East," the initial essay (25 May 1901) of one such series, which ran for thirteen weeks during the summer of 1901 in the Chicago *American Art and Literary Review* under the title of "Frank Norris's Weekly Letter," Norris, using a familiar theme as a point of departure, hails Dreiser's recently published *Sister Carrie* (1900) as the best "realistic fiction since 'A Modern Instance'"—high praise, since Howells's masterpiece had long been one of Norris's favorites.[24] That Norris envisions Dreiser writing "in the very heydey [*sic*] of romantic fiction" as a "grim, uncompromising realist" further positions the comparison to Howells, whose work Norris had earlier singled out for its fidelity to "ordinary" life ("Literature in the East," p. 8).

In Howells's third review of a Norris novel, appearing in October 1901 in *Harper's Monthly*, he effusively labels Norris "a poet among the California wheat-fields" whose "epic of Zolaesque largeness" nonetheless remains purely original.[25] Despite the comparison to Zola, Howells continues to view Norris as a realistic novelist who should avoid the "melodrama towards

[22] Norris, "An American School of Fiction? A Denial," Boston *Evening Transcript*, 22 January 1902, rpt. in *Literary Criticism*, p. 109.

[23] Lars Åhnebrink, *The Beginnings of Naturalism in American Fiction, 1891–1903: A Study of the Works of Hamlin Garland, Stephen Crane, and Frank Norris with Special Reference to Some European Influences* (Uppsala: Almqvist and Wiksells, 1950), p. 117.

[24] Norris, "Literature in the East," *Chicago American Art and Literary Review*, 25 May 1901, 8. Norris was always proud that he had first recommended *Sister Carrie* to his own firm for publication.

[25] Howells, "Editor's Easy Chair," *Harper's Monthly*, 103 (1901), 824.

which Mr. Norris dangerously tends" in *The Octopus*; still, "it is a great book, simple, sombre, large" ("Editor's Easy Chair" [1901], p. 825). How Norris responded either to Howells's lyrical descant on his novel's greatness or to his warning to eschew Zola's maunderings cannot be known directly, although in the presentation copy of *The Octopus* to Howells, dated May 1901, Norris acknowledges that Howells's "good advice and generous criticism have always been the best encouragement of my literary work" (Norris, *Letters*, p. 223). Indirectly, however, the next article in which Norris mentions Howells, "A Plea for Romantic Fiction," published on 18 December 1901 in the Boston *Evening Transcript*, two months after Howells's *Harper's* review, reveals that while he always esteems Howells, Norris no longer considers him a mentor. Realism becomes not reprehensible but "respectable as . . . [in] the novels of Mr. Howells," while Zola, the supreme romanticist, writes "the kind of fiction that takes cognizance of variations from the type of normal life," avoiding realism, which "stultifies itself."[26] As he had in "Zola as a Romantic Writer," Norris again disparages realism for its minute attention to detail—an irony, since Howells approved that technique in Norris's own work. Norris writes that "Realism . . . is the drama of a broken teacup, the tragedy of a walk down the block, the excitement of an afternoon call, the adventure of an invitation to dinner"; though "meticulous," it "choos[es] the ordinary, the untroubled, the commonplace," while romance selects the unusual ("Plea," pp. 76, 78). Norris thus places himself in the curious position of accepting Howells as one of his literary masters, liking many of his novels, even using his techniques, but questioning the validity of his professed fictional theories—that is, the predominance of the realistic method—and all because Norris distorts realism so that Zola's work, which many then decried, could be classified as romance, a school very popular with the current American reading public. Of course, Norris did not jettison Howells overnight, for several years Norris's inchoate literary criticism had exhibited theoretical inconsistencies. But he does fail to recognize that Howells

[26] Norris, "A Plea for Romantic Fiction," Boston *Evening Transcript*, 18 December 1901, rpt. in *Literary Criticism*, p. 76.

was still closer to himself *and* Zola than to the popular romantic fiction then so readily available.

A spate of essays in 1902 ends the second stage of Norris's association with Howells. On 19 January, Norris deprecates "New York as a Literary Center," reminding his audience that many authors working there, among them Howells, had actually migrated from elsewhere (see "New York," p. 38). Norris's instant flight to New York as soon as McClure's beckoned undercuts his theme here in much the same manner as his disapproval of Howellsian realism in favor of his capricious conception of Zola's romanticism had earlier.[27] As noted above, in "An American School of Fiction" Norris praises Howells as the most American of modern writers, yet because he "has had no successors" Norris seems to hold him responsible for failing to establish distinctly American fiction ("American School," p. 109). Although *Silas Lapham* and *A Modern Instance* "laid the foundation of fine, hardy literature, that promised to be our very, very own," that promise remains unfulfilled, says Norris; instead, "a whole confused congeries of borrowed, faked, pilfered romanticisms" appeared ("American School," p. 109). But, one asks, just who is "confused" here—for although respect for Howells again supplies Norris a ready vehicle for expressing his contradictory ideas, those very ideas have become even more ambiguous.

Norris next alludes to Howells in the third number of "Salt and Sincerity" (in the *Critic*, June 1902), when he predictably employs Howells as a yardstick of success, observing that had Henry James and Henry Harland, editor of England's *Yellow Book*, "remained in the United States, addressing themselves to the task of picturing and studying their own countrymen, we might have had a series of novels to set side by side with those of Mr. Howells" ("Salt and Sincerity [III]," p. 202). Norris char-

[27] Norris carries the idea of homegrown art a step further in "An American School of Fiction" by roundly criticizing the typical American who "resolv[ing] upon a career of painting, sculpture or architecture . . . departs for Paris, the Beaux-Arts and the Julien atelier . . . and his education finished returns to propagate French ideas [and] French methods" ("American School," p. 108), but Norris conveniently forgets his own study at Julien's, where he became so enamored of French writers that, as Ahnebrink has exhaustively recorded, his novels disclose a thorough influence by and promulgation of their methods and perhaps their theories.

acteristically reverses his earlier stance that a good writer can write anywhere, although he had told Mrs. Davenport that Howells himself had persuaded him of it. In the fourth "Salt and Sincerity," in July 1902, Norris argues that Howells's impeccable morality produces "great" novels, while in the sixth, appearing two months later in September, he recalls "a novelist of international reputation" (whom Donald Pizer, in his note, surmises was probably Howells himself) who advised him to acquire "little bits of knowledge" for later incorporation into his work (see *Literary Criticism*, pp. 209, 223).

Another comment of Norris's anent Howells occurs in "The Great American Novelist," posthumously syndicated on 19 January 1903. Expatiating on a previous idea, Norris apprehends that Howells's "study" of "the East," like Bret Harte's "of the West," George Washington Cable's "of the Far South," and Edward Eggleston's "of the Middle West," means that "*a* Great American novel" may not be possible; one should look instead for "the Great Novelist who shall also be an American"[28]—another reversal, though a slight one, and thus an appropriate close to this chapter, just as his evening with Howells opened it. That evening specifically, and their friendship generally, gave Norris grist to mill one of his more successful short works, "A Lost Story," also published posthumously.[29] Norris's description of Trevor, a selfless mentor to Rosella Beltis, aspiring novelist and reader of manuscripts for a prominent publishing house, matches well the actual Howells in physical characteristics, behavior, and attitudes. A thoroughly moral man, Trevor, like Howells, would disdain Rosella's temptation to advance her own fledgling novel over a finished one telling an identical story that had crossed her desk for evaluation, but the other novelist's unexpected death allows Rosella to plagiarize his work. At story's end she awaits Trevor's appraisal of her work in his warm study, where a "bisque statuette of a fisher-boy obtruded the vulgarity of its gilding and tinting from the mantelpiece" ("Lost Story," p. 239), recalling that other "bisque fisher boy on the

[28] Norris, "The Great American Novelist," in *Literary Criticism*, pp. 123–24.

[29] See Norris, "A Lost Story," *Century* 66 (July 1903), rpt. in Gertrude Atherton, et al., *The Spinners' Book of Fiction* (San Francisco: Paul Elder, 1907), pp. 221–42. Walker notes Norris's debt to Howells (*A Biography*, p. 171).

mantel" in "A Plea for Romantic Fiction," which "underneat the base" hides a secret that romance rather than realism wi ferret out ("Plea," pp 76–77) Thus Norris adulterates his adu lation of Howells a great writer, his very surroundings belie h misguided taste, instead of reporting the disgrace concealed be neath the statue, Trevor merely keeps it as a gaudy *objet d'art* i his residence, as Howells would simply have mentioned it whi describing a "neighbor's front parlor" ("Plea," p 76)

Apparently Norris never resolved completely this mae strom of theoretical conflict concerning Howells Despite th implied playful mockery of the older writer in "A Lost Story," i his last novel, *The Pit* (1903), evidently completed after the stor Norris obviously regards Howells solidly Laura, whose artist pretensions led her to such precious Victorian authors as Georg Meredith, often reads aloud from her favorites to her husban in order to help relieve his stress after long hours at th Chicago Board of Trade building For his part, Jadwin fails t share her delight until she turns to Howells, whom before the marriage she read only "as a concession"

> "Nothing much happens," he said "But I *know* all those peopl He never could rid himself of a surreptitious admiration for Bar ley Hubbard He, too, was "smart" and "alive" He had the "g there" to him "Why," he would say, "I know fifty boys just like hi down there in La Salle Street" Lapham he loved as a brothe Never a point in the development of his character that he misse or failed to chuckle over Lapham had all his sympathy [30]

One can only surmise where Norris would eventually have sto concerning Howells's realism had he lived, but, as Dillingha contends in *Frank Norris Instinct and Art* (p 125), *The Pit* de scends from Howells's precepts in ways that *McTeague* or eve *The Octopus* does not For all of his impatience with Howells i his essays, that Norris's final novel conforms rather directly t Howells's tenets seems instructive Zola provided Norris wit creative impetus during this second phase in their friendshi but Howells offered him a needed structure for channeling th impetus into appropriately pleasing fiction

[30] Norris, *The Pit A Story of Chicago* (New York Doubleday, Page 1903) pp 42 21

Like chapter one, chapter three in the story of Howells and Norris involves only one of them. Following Norris's unexpected death, Howells, like virtually anyone who knew Norris intimately, sought a way to express his regret over his passing, finding it in the form of a long tribute to his departed friend in the December 1902 *North American Review*. Beyond predictable praise, "Frank Norris" merits attention for several other reasons. First, it confirms Howells's conviction that Norris's best work redirected American fiction, freeing it "from the casual and the occasional, in which it [had] seemed lastingly trammelled" ("Frank Norris," p. 769). Second, Howells also reminds readers once more of Zola's influence on Norris, yet he just as strongly denies too great a debt to the French naturalist; indeed, Howells points out that Norris "had read, and had profited . . . by his study of [other] great realists" as well (p. 772). Howells also refuses to allow his sorrow over Norris's demise to distort his critical acumen: as he had observed in his review of *McTeague*, so he maintains here that sometimes a "lingering passion for the romantic . . . [for] rank melodrama" overpowers Norris ("Frank Norris," p. 773). Fourth, he details Norris's discussion with him about the plot of Norris's proposed wheat trilogy, suggesting that the two enjoyed not just the sort of acquaintance a younger writer might wish to gain with an older, more successful one but a true camaraderie. Again Howells attests to the wondrous power of *McTeague*, which is "greater than [he had] ever yet acknowledged," lamenting that he had failed to commend it highly "enough when praise could have helped most" ("Frank Norris," p. 774). He completes his comments with a nod to Norris's vitality, which he never felt in Crane and despairs of any successor arising to "carry forward work so instinct with the Continent" (p. 777).

Unfortunately, Norris never saw Howells's truest estimate of both him and his talent, an estimate that Howells felt defensibly proud of, as indicated by a humorous aside in a 23 December 1902 letter to Mark Twain, whose article on Christian Science the *North American* had published in the same issue as Howells's appraisal of Norris: "That Christian Science paper of

yours was nearly as good as mine on Norris "[31] Nor do any per sonal letters or notes from Howells to Norris survive, though happily, one to his wife, Jeannette, does Dated 14 Decembe 1902, and previously unpublished, it briefly accepts Jeannette' gratitude for his article, certifying once again Howells's clos regard for his friend

> My dear Mrs Norris
>
> I am glad that my words about your husband gave you som pleasure He lived long enough to prove himself a great man, an I loved him for his work and for himself His loss is a grief to m which I cannot match with yours but which is most genuine [32]

But Howells has not yet done with Norris The next month January 1903, in the "Editor's Easy Chair," his regular colum in *Harper's Monthly*, Howells proclaims that both *McTeague* an *The Octopus* exhibit "such signal mastery, so robust, so compac so vital and yet so graced with the beauty of an art which cam to its consciousness in full maturity, as to merit that compariso which they need not fear with the best of our time "[33] Norris he further asserts, "made life live" ("Editor's Easy Chair" [1903] p 328)—a criticism that Norris, who disdained literature fo life, would have appreciated

In March 1903 for *Harper's Weekly* Howells wrote his las review of a Norris novel, though he ranks *The Pit* below Nor ris's other mature works, Norris excels on "the physical side, which Howells deems "wonderful You can see, hear, feel thos people", still, Howells chastises Norris for focusing too great on Laura and even Jadwin at the expense of the wheat itself obviously the book's true heroine.[34] While time has prove Howells's assessment wrong, it has not negated his sincerity

What remains of this tale is swiftly told In May 1903, agai in the *North American Review*, Howells excluded Norris, as a Cali fornian who left Chicago early in life, from a putative "Chicag

[31] W D Howells, *Selected Letters Volume 5 1902–1911* ed William C Fischer an Christoph K Lohmann (Boston Twayne, 1983) p 42

[32] W D Howells, letter to Jeannette Norris in the Frank Norris Collection The Bancroft Library Univ of California, Berkeley

[33] Howells, Editor s Easy Chair," *Harper's Monthly* 106 (1903) 328

[34] Howells, 'The Last Work of Frank Norris *Harper s Weekly* 14 March 1903, 43

school of fiction."[35] Like Norris himself, Howells seems unable to make up his mind about whether "schools" of writing exist in America; if they do, they must be regional, a position Norris had taken years earlier in "The Great American Novelist." Next, Brand Whitlock's now forgotten novel *The Turn of the Balance*, published in 1907, occasioned almost identical references to Norris in letters Howells wrote to Henry Blake Fuller and to Whitlock himself. On 10 March 1907 Howells wrote to Fuller: "Since the 'Octopus' there has been no novel on either side of the sea to compare with" Whitlock's, while to Whitlock a week later he varies the comparison slightly: "Since The Octopus, there has been no novel so great" (Howells, *Letters, 1902–1911*, pp. 213, 218).

Half a decade later Howells issued a final judgment of Norris, one that largely corroborates his earlier thinking. The January 1912 number of *North American Review* included an article by Arnold Bennett entitled "The Future of the American Novel," originally written in 1903, in which Bennett, while reproving American writers for ignoring their vast country as a fictional subject—opting instead to detail "the thousand forms of local life in America" by writing "fiction of States" rather than "of the United States"—commends Norris's *The Octopus* as "a notable herald" of what America may yet produce: "It is almost the only novel yet produced that deals with the activities of modern American life in a manner at once large, serious, and romantic. . . . There can be small doubt that the great novels of the future will run on the lines of *The Octopus*."[36] Once again echoing Norris, Howells two months later challenged Bennett's assertions with tongue in cheek: "Our novelists are each bound by the accident of birth to this locality or that, and we do not believe we shall ever have a truly United States novel till some genius is born all over the Union."[37] Even Norris, Howells observes, "was a localist," for his western works read better than *The Pit* simply "because he had lived more in California than in

[35] See Howells, "Certain of the Chicago School of Fiction," *North American Review*, 176 (1903), 734–35.

[36] Arnold Bennett, "The Future of the American Novel," *North American Review*, 195 (1912), 83.

[37] Howells, "Editor's Easy Chair," *Harper's Monthly*, 124 (1912), 637.

Chicago", indeed, "closer, firmer, truer than even *The Octopus* is Norris's other great book, *McTeague*, which scarcely ever leaves the shabby San Francisco street where the irregular dentist hangs out his sign of a golden tooth" ("Editor's Easy Chair" [1912], p 637) Just a year previously Howells had compared Bennett favorably to a pantheon of great writers, all of them European save Norris, applauding Bennett's "true fiction" as opposed to his "romantic" side, which contains the same "epical grandeur" that Bennett himself would later extol in *The Octopus*, and concluding that since "Frank Norris, and all the early naturalists are gone, there is no writer living in whose reality we can promise ourselves greater joy than Mr Bennett"[38] While, as Everett Carter claims, age may have withered Howells's creative abilities,[39] custom apparently had staled neither his critical discrimination nor his remarkable memory, for the fourteen years since he had met Norris and ardently recommended his first slight novel to an eager readership had not altered his opinion of Norris's contribution to American letters That he did not see Norris's work as a seamless progression, each novel better than the last, only sharpens the truth and fairness of his final evaluation, for Norris certainly traveled an uneven path in composing his works

Thus concludes an extraordinary friendship It was marked at Norris's end by respect for Howells and thorough knowledge of his work beginning long before they met and continuing until his own death, despite fluctuations in his views on the nature and purpose of written art, and it was marked at Howells's end by approval of Norris the man and great esteem for Norris the writer, commencing with his prophetic review of *Moran* and lasting long after the young author whom he "loved for his work and for himself" had died

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[38] Howells, "Editor's Easy Chair," *Harper's Monthly* 122 (1911) 634 635–36
[39] See *Howells and the Age of Realism* (Philadelphia J B Lippincott, 1950) p 246

Reviews

STEPHEN PRICKETT, *Origins of Narrative: The Romantic Appropriation of the Bible.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996. Pp. xvi + 288. $54.95.

The core historical argument of this book is that the Romantics' way of appropriating the Bible rests on the assumption that the biblical narrative can be read as one reads a novel—that is, looking for "character, motivation and plot." This way of reading was not quite new but "like the modern novel itself, no older than the eighteenth century" (p. 264). As the nineteenth century progressed, British novelists, influenced by biblical criticism, "[read] back into the Bible itself the origins of narrative." It is an error, then, to treat the nineteenth-century novel as a secular genre. Behind the overtly secular concerns of a Dickens or Conrad there lie "the almost ineluctably religious tendencies of nineteenth-century literary consciousness" (p. 266). While Christianity—as a body of doctrine, a metaphysic, and a way of life—lost its hold over Europe's intellectual elites, the Bible, reinterpreted according to the recent traditions of a "secular" genre, continued to exercise a powerful if generally unnoticed influence over prose fiction.

As may already be apparent, this is a book of large gestures and often breathtaking generalizations. Its scope is even wider than I have indicated, in fact, since it does not start examining the Romantic movement until page 107. The first hundred pages are devoted to a celebration of the ironies attendant upon the fact that "Europe's past is rooted in a translated"—which is to say an appropriated—"book," and that "essentially and in its very origins . . . the Bible is . . . a palimpsest of languages and contexts" (p. 6). Awareness of this now well-known fact did not become general among intellectuals until the late 1700s. Ironically, however, it was the King James Bible, a profoundly conservative version even for 1611, that nineteenth-century Britain made the antetype for its own secularized self-imaging.

The style in which this entire argument is conducted suggests a relish for upsetting the complacencies of received opinion more usually associated with the "keynote lecture" genre than with the scholarly monograph. Read as if they were lectures, most of the chapters could be sufficiently described as lively, provocative, wide ranging, and so on. Secularists will be provoked by the assertion that the nineteenth-century novel is "biblical," while those who think of the Bible as fixed in form or meaning will be provoked by the assertion that the nineteenth century started reading the Bible in a new way. This seems to be the effect the book aims for, and it does work, up to a point. The argument about appropriation is not, perhaps, as new or as shocking as Prickett apparently thinks it is (see *The Postmodern Bible*, by the Bible and Culture Collective [New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1995]). Nor will the claim about biblical resonances in the novel be much of a surprise to Victorian literature specialists; indeed Prickett admits that this is hardly a new discovery. In a book with such a wide historical scope—from the early Christian era to the works of Thomas Mann—the critic inevitably has to subsume large tracts of territory opened up by previous scholars. The more urgent question is whether, in the chapters that are more vital to the book's thesis, there is something both new and substantial.

Here the choice of breadth over depth has more serious consequences. At times there is the exhilarating sense of seeing an extensive landscape illuminated from a new angle: Pisgah-sights with a promise of fertile ground to be turned over, new relationships to be formed. But such epiphanic moments are not followed up by any dense filling-in of detail. Rather, it turns out that the object is to move airily from one historic "moment" to another, often relying on the sort of far-reaching comparison that once gave "Zeitgeist" studies a bad name, pairing Chateaubriand with Austen, Schleiermacher with Newman.

The discussion of Laurence Sterne is a good example of both the benefits and the failures of this broad-brush approach. Prickett quotes a long passage from one of Sterne's sermons about the story of the Levite and his concubine (Judges 18), commenting on the way Sterne's exegesis interweaves several voices: the preacher's own, his hearers', the voices suggested by the text, the voice of an imaginary pious commentator, and so on. This is, Prickett claims, a "startlingly modern" approach. Kierkegaard and of course Bakhtin are invoked to support this claim of modernity, which (as such claims go) is fairly unobjectionable, but severe doubts about the real usefulness of the terms Prickett is using creep in when Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* is discovered to be "a novel

spite of itself," so that the "gap between Bunyan and Sterne is much s than might appear at first glance" (p 125) Whatever is still left of : original point becomes irretrievably muddied when the style of rne's sermon is characterized as "Shandian," and the paragraphs on rne end with "It is hard to say if this is an example of the Bible influcing Sterne or Sterne rewriting the Bible" (p 126) This is textual leterminacy as scholarly method The cleverness is undeniable, but loes seem as if the temptation to fire off brilliant asides to impress · gallery has distracted the critic from the job of proving his case.

Despite some small successes in the remaining chapters, such as : discussion of typology in *Mansfield Park*, good paragraphs on Friedh Schlegel's *Athenaeum* Fragments, and a section on Charles Kings-'s *Hypatia* that traces Kingsley's projection of a postromantic sense self-consciousness onto a fifth-century setting, the main argument out the interrelatedness of novel and biblical narrative continues be sketched rather than substantiated There are also some enor-ously damaging gaps in the argument The book takes it for granted it nineteenth-century novelists knew biblical criticism, but it is never plained what biblical critics they knew and how they learned about m The idea of "the Bible as metatype" is central, but Northrop 'e's work is never mentioned, much less engaged with One would pect some consideration of Coleridge in a work on this subject by phen Prickett, but there are only dismissive (and misleading) asides, h as the statement that in reading Eichhorn, Coleridge was "alien-d by what he saw as the sheer crudeness of [Eichhorn's] yardstick historical veracity" (pp. 116-17) There is no hint here that vol-ie 2 of the *Marginalia* in the Princeton-Routledge *Collected Coleridge*, ich appeared in 1984, contains 152 pages of Coleridge's margina-on Eichhorn, or that this and subsequent *Marginalia* volumes also itain extensive notes on many other biblical critics and translators, m Luther to Paulus Coleridge's *Notebooks* are cited in the bibliog-hy (albeit incorrectly), but if one looks for an indication of their vance to the overall topic of the book one finds only a footnote erence to chapter 2 of Prickett's *Romanticism and Religion The Tra-on of Coleridge and Wordsworth in the Victorian Church* (Cambridge nbridge Univ Press, 1976), which is mainly devoted to under-ning Coleridge's credibility as a biblical critic Even if Prickett sees reason to revise his views of over twenty years ago, one would think t, since Coleridge more than anyone else would be likely to regis-the shift of "literary consciousness" that Prickett is tracing, some xamination of the evidence would be called for Unfortunately, vever, this book is not at its best in dealing with either Coleridge or

the Germano-Coleridgeans. There is much more to be found in Rosemary Ashton's *The German Idea* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1980) and N. Merrill Distad's biography of Julius Charles Hare, *Guessing at Truth* (Shepherdstown, W. Va.: Patmos Press, 1979), neither of which is cited.

This is a book that makes a few points very well, with refreshing wit and audacity. However, that is hardly sufficient justification for a three-hundred-page book these days, and given that its omissions are so many and so damaging even to its already very broad argument, it cannot be unequivocally recommended.

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SIMON BAINBRIDGE, *Napoleon and English Romanticism*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995. Pp. xiv + 259. $49.95.

It comes as something of a surprise to learn that this book is the first full-length treatment of a subject that everyone has known about for almost two centuries. Napoleon might be said to be the central figure, even when absent, that everywhere haunts the lives, thoughts, and works of the English Romantics, and it is to Simon Bainbridge's credit that he methodically covers most of the expected terrain (omitting only any extended treatment of Keats and Shelley, the first of whom mentions Napoleon in his letters but not in the poetry and the second of whom refers to him in "The Triumph of Life").

Beginning with Richard Whately's mock-skeptical *Historic Doubts Relative to Napoleon Bonaparte* (1819), Bainbridge discusses the ways in which Napoleon appears as both a real historical figure and a "fabrication or imaginary" one (p. 4); such fabricating helped to define or maintain political and cultural interests. For all of the major Romantics, Napoleon became "a site of cultural contestation" (p. 6). He was routinely elevated and diminished, deified (as Theresa Kelley has demonstrated) as a colossus or caricatured as "little Boney." In whatever other ways Napoleon might have tempted, bewildered, angered, or inspired the various writers with whom Bainbridge deals, it becomes clear during the course of the book that his main interest is mythic instead of simply political: "The contest over Napoleon is a battle for the imagination, a battle in which these writers feel themselves to be fully engaged" (p. 11). Ultimately, although Bainbridge

s not overtly say so, Napoleon becomes a metonym for the age, a esentative as well as an exceptional man

Chapter 1 focuses on the varieties of figuration of Napoleon in works of three first-generation Romantics (Coleridge, Southey, Landor) Coleridge thought of Bonaparte (even, implicitly, in bla Khan") "as a figure who could unite the roles of the politician and the poet," even though Napoleon's later career undid such ification and "prompted Coleridge to distinguish between politi- nd poetic forms of genius" (p 26) By 1802, when Napoleon evidence of failing in his early promise, Coleridge began to sour is estimate of him

Bainbridge devotes the bulk of this chapter to the politically e interesting (but poetically less compelling) work of Landor, es- ally *Gebir* (1798), and Bainbridge's treatment exemplifies both the ngths and weaknesses of his book at large Brian Wilkie and Stuart an have studied Landor's epic in relation to its genre and to con- porary history (although it is interesting to note that Robert Pinsky *ndor's Poetry*, his 1968 book that remains the best critical summary e poetry, deals with the epic largely with regard to style, language, form and hardly bothers to discuss its historical relevance) In the lot of his epic, Landor figures Napoleon as an ideal political fig- contrasted with his tyrannical eponymous hero and with his own e of George III But Landor had to develop Napoleon as an ideal out weakening his basic antiheroic stance throughout the poem bridge makes much (perhaps too much) of the Nymph's pro- y of Napoleon (VI, 185-95), which never actually names but only les to him en passant, and he cites this political prophecy of a new d (with its Virgilian echoes) as Landor's way of figuring Napoleon pastoral, even Christ-like, savior The discussion of these lines ex- lifies what T S Eliot once referred to as the lemon-squeezer ol of criticism, doggedly belaboring the obvious, but the histori- ackground is well handled

Chapters 2 and 3 ("'In Such Strength of Usurpation' Words- h's Napoleonic Imagination," and "'Historiographer[s] to the of Hell' The Lake Poets' Peninsular Campaign") chart the move een on the one hand Wordsworth's grapplings with usurpation, oleon, and "imagination"—in the famous passages in *The Prelude*, s VI and XIV, which have been fully treated by M H Abrams and frey Hartman (among the older, humanistic, and psychologically ed critics) and by Alan Liu (among recent New Historicists)— on the other hand Wordsworth's growing conservatism as wit- d by *The Convention of Cintra* (1809) Bainbridge does not so h overturn as clarify and modify Liu's important discussion (in

Wordsworth: The Sense of History [1989]) of Wordsworth's inclusion-through-omission of Napoleon in the Simplon Pass section of *The Prelude*, where he "absorbs him within the structures of the imagination" (p. 94) and appropriates him to his needs for heroism and epic. Although Napoleon is a model of the imagination, Bainbridge also sees that the "'Imagination' fights against Napoleon" as Wordsworth actively engages with him. During the next decade, from the peninsular campaign to the final defeat at Waterloo, as Wordsworth became progressively more conservative he also reimagined Napoleon as a historical and an imaginary figure, until in the "Thanksgiving Ode" he was able to lay the ghost of his great original to rest. Like Coleridge and Southey, Wordsworth came gradually to demonize Napoleon, thinking of him as a Satanic figure (in a purely negative, antiheroic way, as Southey does in *The Curse of Kehama* and Coleridge does throughout his prose). As Bainbridge notes, even the prose analysis in *The Convention of Cintra* serves an imaginative need more than a strictly political one within Wordsworth's responses to and treatments of Bonaparte. "The Spanish cause was by no means as perfect a political cause as Wordsworth makes it appear but it served his own purposes perfectly" (p. 106).

Chapter 4 ("Staging History: Byron and Napoleon, 1813-1814") disappoints by undervaluing the complex irony and wit in much of Byron's identification with Napoleon. Still, Bainbridge is right to stress Byron's lifelong engagement with Bonaparte, who "dominated [his] imagination like no other contemporary political figure" (p. 135) and whom he transformed into a mythic figure while simultaneously thinking of himself as "the grand Napoleon of the realms of rhyme." Bainbridge overstresses the poetic ramifications of Byron's expectations that Napoleon would play a tragic Shakespearean role on the European stage. According to Bainbridge, Napoleon's failure to become a tragic hero "prompted a crisis of personal identification" for Byron (p. 143), and Bainbridge correctly cites Jerome Christensen's sensible observations that Byron could never become Napoleon because Napoleon himself could not. Bainbridge is much more sympathetic to the tragic and posturing Byron than to the witty and self-deprecating one. Don Juan and the satires take a back seat, finally, to Childe Harold and the "Ode to Napoleon Buonaparte."

The final two chapters, on Waterloo and on Hazlitt's "Napoleonic riposte," are probably the book's strongest achievement. Since Waterloo was the event that essentially ushered in the new world order of the nineteenth century, it is no wonder that English writers felt a combination of pride and anxiety as the dreams and excesses of the French Revolution were finally laid to rest. "Southey represents Water-

as nothing less than the historical equivalent of the fall" (p 165), for most of the first generation of Romantics this was certainly a tunate fall, indeed Wordsworth, in his three sonnets on Waterloo l the "Thanksgiving Ode," composed fairly lifeless poems celebrat- the reestablishment of peace, Bainbridge makes a persuasive case understanding "the integrity of his exploration of his own repre- tation of the war against Napoleon" (p 172) It is, tout simple, the lmination of Wordsworth's transformation of the war against Napo- n into an apocalyptic struggle, a manoeuvre that side-stepped his- cal complexity" (p 175) Byron, on the other hand, kept up his gagement with Napoleon by merging their two identities Finally, zlitt sounded the ultimate Napoleonic note, converting the French- n, like Milton's Satan, into a representation of the "cause of the ople," a successful man of the meritocracy The radical is given the word in his passionate arguments with the Lakers, Hazlitt fought inst the younger reactionary forces that were propping up a new ope

Bainbridge's book is, for good as well as ill, a thesis-book It reads a reincarnation of the author's doctoral dissertation and is often luly respectful of other critics There is a tendency to bludgeon the der and to repeat certain points within a single chapter he quotes e times Landor's youthful wish that George III be hung "between such thieves as the archbishops of Canterbury and York " There is some sloppiness in the writing—e g , "the guilt of which Words- th felt himself implicated in" (p 66), "his awareness of these com- x issues are seen" (p 174)—and in the scholarship (An under- idable narcissism compels me to observe that Bainbridge has both quoted and misnamed the author of the 1985 *Wordsworth's Heroes*, ddition, it is W J Bate, not Harold Bloom [p 110], who named a ok after what Wordsworth referred to as "the burthen of the past ")

Although *Napoleon and English Romanticism* fulfills many of the in- tions of the new Cambridge Studies in Romanticism series, it will of less interest to students of poetry than to cultural scholars who n to understand English Romanticism from a single vantage point, his case a military-political one Bainbridge does not really enlarge understanding or appreciation of the poetry per se, and anyone ose primary bent is aesthetic will be a bit disappointed On the other d, as a rendering of the historical engagement between art and temporary history, the private world and the public arena, the ok illuminates a major subject with conviction and thoroughness

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GERALDINE FRIEDMAN, *The Insiste History Revolution in Burke, Wordsworth, Keats, and Baudelaire* ford Stanford University Press, 1996 Pp xiv + 270 $39 50

"To say that history insists," Geraldine Frie writes in her introduction to *The Insistence of History*, is "to joi much recent historicist work in challenging characterizations c mantic and post-Romantic writing as aestheticist and apolitical it is also, she adds, "to part company with such critiques," for "i texts under consideration historical occurrence is struck by a st absence at the moment it is most intensely engaged" (p 2) The retical impulse behind *The Insistence of History* is to bridge the ga tween historicist and rhetorical, especially deconstructive, appro to literature Friedman does not pursue this impulse through le theoretical discussions but rather via a series of close readings c authors listed in the book's subtitle Burke's *Enquiry into the Orig Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful* and *Reflections on the Revo in France* are discussed in one chapter, while poems by Words (books 7 and 10-12 of *The Prelude*), Keats (the two Hyperions) Baudelaire (the prose poems "Les yeux des pauvres" and "Assom les pauvres!") are given two chapters each As these readings clear, Friedman is more than able to negotiate sophisticated the cal concerns, but they also show that her concern with theory from an engagement with the rhetoric of the works themselves

Yet while Friedman does not address directly the "larger deba post-structuralism and history" (p 5), she makes at least one i theoretical argument the attempt to bring together rhetorica historicist approaches tends to reaffirm a mutual antagonism r than to promote a synthesis Either the two approaches remain di or one collapses into the other. Friedman sees this situation as other version of the missed appointment between literature an tory" (p 6), a tendency she finds in various authors to write "arc rather than "about" revolution, even when history is an explicit th History is like the memory trace of a traumatic event making its ence felt through its absence or indirect representation In words, history's insistence lies in its persistence One bridge fro construction to historicism would thus seem to be psychoanal the trauma theory of critics like Felman and Caruth cited early i book—though Friedman is not programmatic here Her appro somewhat eclectic, but deconstructive logic predominates

The works that Friedman discusses certainly lend themsel deconstruction, especially the philosophical arguments—perhap cause they are arguments?—of Burke In discussing the *Enquiry* F

man shows convincingly how Burke's mode of reasoning informs the reasoning itself Burke attempts to ground aesthetic experience in the senses, asserting that his theory is independent of his examples But Friedman's reading of Burke's examples suggests that they evoke narratives—such as one involving regicide—that might be fruitfully regarded as repressed More important, the experience of sublimity or beauty often requires prior experiences and an ability to make associations, as with the passages in certain poems that achieve their effects not through imagery and sound but through a kind of pleasurable confusion evoked by odd conjunctions of words that have come to be associated with their effect Habits and customs play an even greater role in the *Reflections*, of course, and Friedman goes on to make some thought-provoking connections between this 1790 work and Burke's earlier treatise What is most impressive here is what is least reproducible in a review a sustained attention to rhetorical twists and turns

Friedman's interpretations should ultimately be judged according to the needs and temperament of the reader Because her introduction deemphasizes the book's theoretical argument and she provides no conclusion, readers should feel free to consult the sections that interest them most One admirable quality of the book lies in its short, to-the-point, and (for the most part) detachable chapters Every chapter after the Burke contains fewer than thirty pages and can be read, if not in isolation, then in two-chapter units centered on one author Every chapter also contains local observations and provides historical context that readers—specialists or not—will find helpful, though how and to what degree will vary with one's familiarity with the works under discussion and the secondary literature The last chapter, on Baudelaire's prose poem "Let's beat up the poor!," provides an extreme example of this phenomenon The poem has already been discussed in terms similar to Friedman's by Jonathan Monroe (acknowledged in the footnotes) and by Richard Burton (whose *Baudelaire and the Second Republic Writing and Revolution*, published in 1991, oddly receives no notice). It is not as though Monroe and Burton have said the last word on the subject, but it will be disappointing for the reader who knows this criticism and is sympathetic to Friedman's project to see the usual suspects—Baudelaire's prose poems about the poor—dredged up for an analysis that mainly amplifies what has been said But again, this chapter is an extreme case, and the quibblings of such a reader should not obscure the fact that Friedman's commentary comes off as accurate and concise They should, however, raise the question of audience

Audience is an issue for every book, and *The Insistence of History* raises the issue in a way that reveals some of the pressures that the pro-

fession is currently exerting on scholars writing their first books. Fried-man's book focuses on one period (Romanticism) with comfortab margins on either side (Burke and Baudelaire), and thus it gains au thority by avoiding the appearance of too-narrow specialization (sing author, single genre, single movement) yet establishing a kind of cen ter (mostly English, mostly poetry, mostly Romanticism). There ar hints of comparatist work, but they remain intimations for the mo part (the book must stay English-centered, given Friedman's depar mental affiliation), and the requisite theoretical discussion is curtail or articulated in footnotes as if to prove competence without declarin allegiance. Even the bridge between deconstruction and historicisi can be seen as an index of the profession's (potentially contradictory demands on a first book. When considered as a response to some ou side pressure, the opening question of *The Insistence of History* wi haunt the reader's understanding of the book. Friedman begins b asking, "What becomes of the possibility of doing politics when ther is no sovereign subject able to control the effects of its decisions, act and words?" Something outside the individual scholar's control—ca it the profession's recent history—is insisting that we should wri within certain generic constraints.

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Edward Copeland, *Women Writing about Money: Women's Fiction in England, 1790–1820.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995. Pp. xviii + 291. $49.95.

Edward Copeland began his study with the idea of writing about money in Jane Austen but then expanded his inquiry to examine not only canonical novelists like Frances Burney and Ma ria Edgeworth who shared Austen's "genteel" expectations, but also didactic novelists like Hannah More and Mary Brunton who dispensed economic and domestic advice to their readers, and popular novelists like Eliza Parsons and Sarah Green who wrote "horrid" novels of the kind read by Isabella Thorpe in *Northanger Abbey*. The result of his expanded inquiry is an excellent study that contributes valuably to a materialist understanding of Austen while demonstrating in fascinating detail the cultural significance of popular fiction appearing under the imprint of the Minerva Press or in *The Lady's Magazine*. Far more important to Copeland than the aesthetic gulf that separates *Northanger*

Abbey, say, from *The Castle of Wolfenbach* is their common preoccupation with the vulnerability of women in a misogynistic economy "When contemporary authors turn from sentimental convention to economic injustice," Copeland observes, "to the fecklessness of men, to the vulgarity of the parvenu, and to the courage of the single woman alone and struggling in a hostile economy, their novels grow incandescent" (p 13)

The want of money, Copeland shows, was a general calamity for female novelists and readers alike Generally disbarred from the ownership of landed property, their fortunes (when they possessed them) in the hands of possibly incompetent or dishonest male trustees, women frequently found themselves stretched beyond the limits of available funds Moreover, the limited but real control they had over domestic spending was endangered by the rapid inflation in commodity prices that took place in the period Responding to the economic plight of women, novels and magazines provided "a free-wheeling conversation in print" (p 6) What did it mean to be a woman in a market economy? By what means of employment might a single woman, a widow, even a wife achieve financial independence? What sum of money constituted a "competence"?

Answers to such questions varied according to the kind of novel and the readership it assumed Despite Mary Wollstonecraft's insistence in *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792) that women might aspire to become physicians or businesswomen, genteel novelists looked with a jaundiced eye on wage-earning employment, as the predicament of Jane Fairfax in *Emma* famously shows Didactic novelists, on the other hand, stressed the respectability of female employment, and Minerva novelists represented employment as not only necessary but as "a grudged triumph over an economy that has turned its back on women" (p 166) Yet, as Copeland describes in chapter 6, the employments open to women (from governess and companion down to schoolmistress, sempstress, actress, and prostitute) more often than not failed to provide happiness and security Authorship itself (treated in chapter 7) was hardly a way out No main character in any woman's novel, Copeland points out, ever seeks to be an author (p 193), and the reason is not only the fall in social status that authorship entailed but the real financial dangers of publication

On the question of financial competency (however achieved), contemporary readers had clear ideas Schooled in the fiction of the circulating libraries, they would see the joke of Marianne Dashwood's idea of a "competence" in *Sense and Sensibility* Her figure of £2,000 a year is twice what her sister Elinor considers "wealth" Indeed, £1,000 is high in the "competency scale," as Copeland shows in a detailed

comparison of expectations graded by rank and status. At this level a family might think of setting up a carriage. Despite Elinor's sensible assessment of Marianne's expectations, however, Austen's sense of what her own status required was high. When Colonel Brandon makes his gift of the Delaford living to Edward, that income, when added to those of Edward and Elinor, will bring in £350 per annum, but, as Austen writes, "they were neither of them quite enough in love to think that three hundred and fifty pounds a year would supply them with the comforts of life." For a Minerva Press author, on the other hand, writing for and about the families of merchants, tradesmen, and the lesser professions, £350 might betoken a degree of prosperity.

Copeland's argument is that income per se is never the whole story. As Adam Smith understood, "necessaries" had symbolic as well as economic meaning: they were the goods required to maintain claims to social rank—two or more servants, fashionable dress and furniture, a carriage, a set of china, a pianoforte, and so on. In *Sense and Sensibility*, as Mrs. Jennings is well aware, Lucy Steele could easily make do on the income that Edward and Elinor consider insufficient, but Lucy's origins are in trade and her connections are with, at best, the lesser professions. In the novels of Austen, as in the novels of Burney and the "genteel Gothic" of Charlotte Smith, the central question is not primarily whether the genteel heroine will survive but how she can maintain her status in a mobile and aggressively competitive economy. Clara Reeve in *Plans of Education* (1792) plaintively wished for a revival of the sumptuary laws (p. 60). Short of this, favored characters in genteel novels respond to the threat of "smart" *arrivistes* (like Mrs. Elton in *Emma*) with "cultural capital" (p. 108). Or they use educational capital, speaking and writing English in a way that puts the Lucy Steeles of this world to shame. Invariably they avoid extravagant sartorial display. They may even demur from "shopping": Elinor Dashwood engages in a "negotiation" of her mother's jewels at Gray's, while the absurdly self-obsessed Robert Ferrars shops for a toothpick (p. 95).

At the heart of Copeland's study is his excellent analysis of Jane Austen in chapter 4. Caught between a traditional rural economy and one of competitive consumption, Austen sought in all of her novels to define a moral economics by distinguishing between acceptable and unacceptable consumption, good and bad gift-giving. Her relation to consumer culture was not merely antagonistic, however. Copeland splendidly disputes H. W. Garrod's dismissal of the letters as "a desert of trivialities punctuated by occasional oases of clever malice" by showing how implicated Austen was in the acquisition of commodities, along with their signifying power (pp. 90-92). Nor, Copeland insists, should we take Austen's moral evaluations of consumption in the nov-

els at face value Following David Spring, Copeland sees Austen as a member of the "pseudo-gentry," anxious to retain her connections to the landed order, and following Pierre Bourdieu, he reads manners in relation to consumption as a way of retaining and legitimating power

Copeland reminds us that Austen's novels were tossed onto the same tables at the circulating libraries as those of Mary Meeke, Sarah Green, and Rachel Hunter and that, just like these Minerva novelists, she was promoting the values of her class (p 114) That Austen has long since been rescued by her admirers from that kind of "circulation" is, for Copeland, a mixed blessing, since the rescue silences the dialogues in which she was dynamically engaged even as it fosters the uncritical acceptance of her values "Austen's most surprising triumph," Copeland suggests, "may be the preeminent place in posterity that she achieves for her own social rank" (p 87)

That other values than Austen's were in circulation is clear from Copeland's discussion, in chapter 3, of narratives of women actively managing the domestic economy Whereas novelists of the 1790s had shown in luridly "Gothic" ways that women had no legal economic power, women novelists after 1800 proposed various financial roles for women—suited to different ranks and incomes, to be sure, but allied in a common intention of "removing consumer spending from its traditional association with excess and disorder by consigning it to the supervision of sensible, respectable women" (p 87) In genteel fiction, women manage village as well as household economies In Elizabeth Hamilton's *The Cottagers of Glenburnie* (1808) Mrs Mason improves the squalid highland village she retires to, and in Hannah More's *Coelebs in Search of a Wife* (1809) Lucilla Stanley encourages cottage gardens in the village Novelists like Mary Meeke and Sarah Green, on the other hand, describe heroines who play out their economic dramas not in a gentrified economy but in the great urban economy of the time Meeke's novels "depict a stable, thriving economy founded on commerce, in which Great Merchants monitor and correct the temptations to pride in the aristocracy, fecklessness in the gentry, and graft and greed in tradesmen and petty professionals" (p 8)

Copeland's reading in what was once considered sub-literature is vast (he lists several hundred novels in a selected bibliography), and his powers of synthesis are impressive indeed Scholars are unlikely to see Jane Austen in quite the same way after reading this study, and some will be inspired to give more than a cursory glance at novels by Meeke, Green, Rachel Hunter, and others, even including Mrs Parsons As befits this distinguished addition to the Cambridge Studies in Romanticism series, the book is well designed and printed Its twenty-six illustrations (mostly from *The Lady's Magazine*) reproduce well and

are incisively analyzed in chapter 5 for the ways in which they advertise fashion, illustrate the consumer economy, and show heroines, literally, on the margin. If, like Jane Austen, Edward Copeland likes praise, he is sure to be gratified by the reception of his fine study. Whether he will receive "pewter" also may be in some doubt; the book's price suggests that, as a commodity, it is mainly destined for academic rather than circulating libraries.

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VALERIE GAGER, *Shakespeare and Dickens: The Dynamics of Influence*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996. Pp. xx + 419. $59.95.

Valerie Gager divides *Shakespeare and Dickens: The Dynamics of Influence* into three thorough parts. The first part covers all of the evidence that anyone has ever found to demonstrate Dickens's immersion in Shakespeare and his persistent fascination with every sort of theatrical performance. The second part explicates the three different modes (quotation, allusion, echo) and eleven different functions by which Shakespeare answers Dickens's creative requirements: from generating titles—twenty-five titles in the fiction, many more if you include the periodicals—to setting atmosphere. (Did I say thorough?) And the third part catalogs roughly one thousand literal borrowings from Shakespeare by Dickens: word-for-word quotations or virtually word-for-word allusions—about eight hundred more, Gager claims, than anyone has previously noticed.

This list of "borrowings" seems for the most part indisputable, and sometimes even illuminating, especially when Gager flexes her strong grasp of nineteenth-century stage history. Here's a typical small gem. Small-minded Dickensians who think they know Shakespeare better than he have caviled at the description in *Martin Chuzzlewit* of Mrs. Hominy's procession as "quite the last scene from Coriolanus." Volumnia's procession, they cattily show, does not appear in the last scene of *Coriolanus* but three from the last. Gager, however, knows better. She knows that Dickens was thrilled by Macready's historic production of the play in 1838, a staging that restored Shakespeare's original *except* for keeping the earlier convention that merged Volumnia's sequence with the final scene. Indeed, Gager can quote to great effect how Macready brilliantly worked Volumnia's scene, and thereby she helps us understand, first, why Dickens would not only have

remembered the play in exactly that way four years later but also would have expected at least his London-based readers to remember it that way, and also why it is so much funnier to think of Mrs. Hominy's procession when we know how completely cheesy it is in contrast to Macready's magnificent analogue. Gager's point here—and it is one of her best—is that Dickens not only knew intimately what Shakespeare wrote but also knew equally well an in-many-ways divergent tradition of Shakespeare staged, and that Dickens is as likely to be thinking of a particular moment in a purged script as he is to be thinking of the pure text.

And yet, despite all of its commendable thoroughness, perhaps *Shakespeare and Dickens* brews too pale an ale. Gager will credit as influence only unmistakable literal overlap. Thus, Madame Defarge cannot be influenced by Lady Macbeth, counter to Andrew Sanders's claim, because nothing she says—or that Dickens says about her—quotes from or alludes to any specific passage in *Macbeth*. If Madame Defarge had "engaged in obsessive handwashing" or if she "had gone wandering about the barricades in a trance," then, Gager claims, she could see a basis for the parallel (p. 248). To be quite candid, Madame Defarge probably does not have all that much to do with Lady Macbeth. But if you could show how Shakespeare's virago helps shape Dickens's representation of a woman driving her husband to a violence that ultimately overwhelms even the instigator, then who would give two hoots whether she never washed her hands or stayed firmly in her own rooms, knitting or not. What does it matter how many clones had Lady Macbeth? What matters is how ideas get transmitted and transformed. And by limiting her study only to linguistic overlap, Gager winds up offering us a Dickens who uses Shakespeare's words to speak Shakespeare's, not Dickens's, meanings.

For Gager, the predecessor is constantly exercising "a generative power . . . which manifests itself in diverse ways in the works of the disciple" (p. 162). Generative? Disciple? Isn't this influence as theology: Shakespeare a benevolent demiurge, breathing life and language into Dickensian prime matter? Influence not déjà vu, but déjà voodoo.

Of course, Gager is right on target when she claims that Dickens engages his readers "in a continuous process of reassessment by creating a dense referential pattern of quotations, allusions and echoes" (p. 19). But the key word here, her own, is "reassessment." Anarchic, narcissistic Dickens preys on his predecessors—all of his predecessors, not just Shakespeare—at the same time refusing and re-fusing them. *Coriolanus* is parodied, not just purloined, in Mrs. Hominy. Micawber may indeed derive from Falstaff, Macbeth, Hamlet pere, and Polonius (pp. 191-93), but he is an uxorious Falstaff, a pacific Macbeth, an en-

tirely ineffectual papa, and (finally) an effective Polonius. Gager is right and clever to hear "This is I, Hamlet the Dane" echoing in "I am David Copperfield, of Blunderstone" (p. 238). But what a difference between the self-alienated "This is I" and that almost theophanic "I am," the difference between a son who can only self-destructively retell his father's story and a son who refuses that story at every turn in order to turn out the hero of his own life.

The pity and the irony here are that Gager at her numerous best moments seems to know this. Late in the book she shows how *Dombey* uses *Antony and Cleopatra*; earlier, she had shown how profoundly Florence's expulsion and reunion draw on the very different tropes of *The Winter's Tale*. Nowhere does she put those two insights together. In the same way, while she insistently reads *Copperfield* as *Hamlet*, she also knows that it uses the Dora plot to become something quite close to *Two Gentleman of Verona* and *Twelfth Night*. Yet, because in her view all meaning is local, Gager will *not* connect, nor fuse, instances of influence into an authentically Dickensian agenda: say, the harrowed displacement of tragedy by comedy and romance. She will not even connect her own intuitions. Thus Gager excludes from the final catalog of borrowings any passage that she has mentioned in the first parts of the book, and even that final catalog, potentially the most useful section, is organized not novel by novel but play by play. Thus throughout *Shakespeare and Dickens* Shakespeare "presides"[1] and Dickens finds himself divvied out into mere insights, where he might well and memorably have been read.

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MATTHEW ARNOLD, *The Letters of Matthew Arnold. Volume 1, 1829–1859*. Edited by Cecil Y. Lang. Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1996. Pp. xxviii + 549. $60.

CHARLOTTE BRONTË, *The Letters of Charlotte Bronte, with a Selection of Letters by Family and Friends. Volume 1, 1829–1847*. Edited by Margaret Smith. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995. Pp. xviii + 627. $90.

The authors of these two magnificently edited volumes of letters had an inauspicious encounter in December 1850. The ambitious young poet, his career as school inspector looming before him, addressed the celebrated author of *Jane Eyre*, "past thirty and

plain" (as he wrote to his fiancée), "with expressive gray eyes." They spoke of "her curates [from *Shirley*], of French novels, and her education at Brussels" (pp. 179-80). Initially put off by his manner ("its seeming foppery"), Bronte soon detected "a real modesty ... under his assumed conceit, and some genuine intellectual aspirations as well as high educational acquirements." But she was appalled by his lack of conventional religion, his serene denial of "our hope of immortality", and as a result, "a savor of bitterness seasoned [her] feelings towards him." If she was dismayed by his worldliness, he was no less dispirited by her inwardness. Her last novel, he complained in an 1853 letter to his best friend, Arthur Hugh Clough, reflected nothing beyond its author's "hunger rebellion and rage" (p. 262). *Villette* seemed like one more example of "the dialogue of the mind with itself" (to quote from another 1853 pronouncement, the "Preface to *Poems*"). Yet her death, two years later, moved him to eulogize, in "Haworth Churchyard," one who "had told / With a master's accent her feigned / Story of passionate life."

The entire history of Matthew Arnold's relations with Charlotte Bronte can be seen in volume one (the first of a projected six) of this new, ongoing edition of his letters. Her views, footnoted here by Arnold's editor, Cecil Y. Lang (p. 180), will appear in due course in a future volume of the Bronte letters, edited by Margaret Smith. It is a pleasure to report that, after a long wait for collections of their letters to replace the unsatisfactory volumes edited, respectively, by G. W. E. Russell and by T. J. Wise and J. A. Symington, Arnold and Bronte have found editors worthy of them. Written with a deliciously Arnoldian mixture of worldly wisdom and sly humor, Lang's introduction and notes abound in Arnoldian "vivacities." Smith treats her subject with exemplary sobriety and dedication. Her aim is "to enhance our understanding of the woman who wrote some of the most memorable and compelling novels of the nineteenth century" (p. 71). Lang's object is to present "a body of letters that may well be the finest portrait of an age and of a person, representing the main movements of mind and of events of nearly half a century and at the same time revealing the actual intimate life of the participant-observer, in any collection of English letters in the nineteenth century, possibly in existence" (p. xiv). In Lang's expert hands Arnold emerges as a Stendhalian observer of the major European tendencies of his time. He is also seen in his non-Stendhalian capacities as devoted friend and family member, as engaged social critic and hardworking civil servant, as poet, nature-lover, and Francophile. For her part, Smith has produced a narrative worthy of Chekhov: we see the oldest of three sisters pining away in

the provinces, impatient "of restraint & steady work" and having "such a strong wish for wings—wings such as wealth can furnish—such an urgent thirst to see—to know—to learn . . ." (p. 266).

Familiar though the Bronte saga may be, it remains the saddest story for a biographer or editor to relate. Juliet Barker has recently expunged the Bronte myths and successfully placed the family within their historical and local context. Smith similarly situates Charlotte Bronte in the context of family and friends; she draws upon their letters and commentary in order to supply needful details. Hence we have Ellen Nussey's valuable reminiscences of the "silent, weeping, dark little figure" she first met at Roe-Head School (p. 589) as a supplement to Charlotte's adolescent note to Ellen offering "sisterly affection" (p. 117). As seen in the letters, Ellen is a more positive figure than the pathetic image drawn by Barker, and Charlotte is far more vulnerable, desperate, and sympathetic than she appears in Barker. Her need for a kindly confessor comes out in outbursts to Ellen: "I am *not like you*. If you knew my thoughts, the dreams that absorb me, and the fiery imagination that at times eats me up and makes me feel Society as it is, wretchedly insipid you would pity and I dare say despise me" (p. 144). She had once sought consolation from her brother, Branwell, and she would later beg for verbal sustenance from her Brussels schoolmaster, Constantin Heger ("Dites-moi enfin ce que vous voulez mon maître, mais dites-moi quelque chose" [p. 434]). She had, in Mary Taylor, another friend from her schooldays "nearly as mad as myself" (p. 151) to correspond with, but that adventurous figure (who, unfortunately, destroyed most of Charlotte's letters to her) was far off. But it was above all to Ellen that Charlotte shared the details of her life, her choice of literary heroes (Scott, Shakespeare, Byron [pp. 121, 130]), her dislike of "governesship" (p. 204), her experience in the "great selfish city" of Brussels (p. 289), her chagrin at Branwell's "bad habits" (p. 418). Lacking a creative temperament, Nussey could not occupy the position that Clough held with Arnold; yet she frequently summoned forth "incautious" personal utterances from Bronte that Bronte's future husband found incendiary (p. 1).

Smith gives unexpurgated versions of the 380 surviving letters to Nussey, some of them newly redated or even newly pieced together correctly. Other significant letters are addressed to the poet laureate (the famous letter to Robert Southey, to whom Charlotte turned in vain for encouragement), to her family, to Heger, to her publisher George Smith, and to her sympathetic reader W. S. Williams. Smith's "History of the Letters" is almost a Jamesian narrative (containing a "publishing scoundrel"), and her notes are highly informative. De-

spite Brontë's protest that "nothing happens at Haworth" (p. 507), Smith shows that the novelist was not unoccupied. The volume ends with the triumphant publication in 1847 of *Jane Eyre*, its author having become the "lion" Arnold would be honored to meet. In the last letter, to Williams, Brontë expresses amusement at a Scottish reviewer's comparison of Jane Eyre to Becky Sharp: "the resemblance would hardly have occurred to me" (p. 587).

Like Smith, Lang gives us letters not only by his subject but also about him, but whereas Smith's volume does not add significantly to the corpus of known Brontë letters, Lang includes many important Arnold letters unknown to previous editors. (Not until page 79 do we get to the first letter printed in Russell.) And Lang is able to quote more fully now from those surviving Arnold letters to his family that were previously "often dismembered almost beyond recognition" (p. xix). Arnold's "largeness of horizon" (in James's view), his talent for living and observing with intensity and humor, are displayed everywhere in the volume at hand. Arnold inherited his father's capacity, as the son put it, to "open his heart as wide as he likes" in his letters (p. 59). He shared too his entire family's love of lively interchange. All of the Arnolds, from the evidence here, seem to have been good letter writers. The deservedly famous letters to Clough reveal Arnold at his most earnest, but we also catch, in the family letters, intimate glimpses of an irresistibly "merry Matt." To Jane Arnold, his "dearest K," he brooded about the changes in France in 1848, concluding that such "social changes are *inevitable* here & elsewhere" (p. 94). (In the next decade Arnold would focus on education—as would his successor, John Dewey—as the key element in the rise of democracy.) To Clough, a year later, Arnold contended, "these are damned times—everything is against one—the height to which knowledge is come, the spread of luxury, our physical enervation, the absence of great *natures*, the unavoidable contact with millions of small ones, newspapers, cities, light profligate friends, moral desperadoes like Carlyle, our own selves, and the sickening consciousness of our difficulties: but for God's sake let us neither be fanatics nor yet chaff blown by the wind" (p. 156). Yet in 1850 we also have an image of Matt—this time supplied by Jane—indulging in "boistrous . . . fun-making," roaring with laughter over his jokes one moment, the next moment "stretched at full length on one sofa, reading a Christmas tale of Mrs Gaskell's which moves him to tears, & the tears to complacent admiration of his own sensibility" (p. 181).

As the 1850s progress we see Arnold as a loving husband and father (noting how his small sons "imitate all I do," even to the point of

"writing poems" [p. 489]), as an overworked inspector of schools (comparing the superior facilities and greater access to education offered by Continental schools to those of England), and as a cosmopolite (becoming friends with Sainte-Beuve, Renan, and, above all, Louisa Lady de Rothschild). Lang reprints for the first time since 1859 Arnold's long letter to the London *Times* debunking the national craze for building in the "Gothic" style. "To have studied an age well," Arnold writes, "makes us sensible to its merits, indulgent to its faults, but to have studied an age exclusively makes us overrate it" (pp. 505–6). And we see Arnold, having been elected Professor of Poetry at Oxford in 1857, asking to speak in English. As a believer in education and democracy, Arnold railed against "the preposterousness of an Englishman lecturing to Englishmen in a dead language" (p. 363); he felt that ideas should be widely accessible. By the end of the decade Arnold had more or less set aside his poetic ambitions: by his mid-thirties he felt himself, as he told Clough, "three parts iced over" (p. 252). Yet he was also on the brink of writing the *Essays in Criticism*, the first in a series of prose masterpieces, as well as the lectures *On Translating Homer* and *On the Study of Celtic Literature*.

At a time when university presses seem increasingly reluctant to publish volumes of letters, all praise is due to Oxford University Press and the University Press of Virginia for these invaluable editions. And we applaud the University of Nebraska Press for having agreed to publish all of the letters of America's greatest novelist, Henry James. Lang's edition of Arnold could not have appeared at a better time. Arnold's "playful and poised" ironies, as James R. Kincaid recently noted in *The New York Times Book Review* (16 March 1997), usefully challenge current social stupidities and academic pieties. "His message remains as urgent now," Lang maintains, "as it was a century ago. 'We have met the enemy and he is us'" (p. ix).

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Books Briefly Noted

ALEXANDER, DORIS. *Creating Literature Out of Life: The Making of Four Masterpieces: "Death in Venice," "Treasure Island," "The Rubáiyát of Omar Khayyám," "War and Peace."* University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1996. Pp. viii + 253. $39.50.

Psychoanalytic theory provides the angle of vision for these discussions of the biographical and creative provenances of Stevenson's and FitzGerald's masterpieces.

ARATA, STEPHEN. *Fictions of Loss in the Victorian Fin de Siècle.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996. Pp. xii + 235. $49.95.

Explores the impact upon literature and other imaginative constructions of that sense of decline and decadence that in part characterizes late-Victorian culture. Among the writers discussed are Wilkie Collins, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, Bram Stoker, H. Rider Haggard, Rudyard Kipling, Robert Louis Stevenson, John Addington Symonds, and Oscar Wilde.

BANERJEE, JACQUELINE. *Through the Northern Gate: Childhood and Growing Up in British Fiction, 1719–1901.* Studies in Nineteenth-Century British Literature Series, vol. 6. New York: Peter Lang, 1996. Pp. xxx + 244. $49.95.

Argues that childhood became a focus of interest in British fiction well before the Romantic period and that children in the Victorian novel are not merely sentimental figures, but psychologically unique characterizations that contribute positively and significantly to the narrative discourse.

BARKER, MARTIN, and ROGER SABIN. *The Lasting of the Mohicans: History of an American Myth.* Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1995. Pp. x + 248. $45 cloth, $16.95 paper.

A fascinating study of the many retellings of Cooper's popular book in twentieth-century popular media—in films, on stage, radio, and television, and in comic books and other abridged and adapted printed texts—that reveals much about changing American attitudes toward the frontier and civilization.

BEENE, LYNNDIANNE. *Guide to British Prose Fiction Explication: Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries.* A Reference Publication in Literature Series. New York: G. K. Hall, 1997. Pp. xlviii + 697. $70.

Readers would be so much better served if compilations such as this one were published on-line (allowing for frequent updates and corrections) rather than in hard copy. Providing neither evaluative nor descriptive annotations, this checklist has merit only so far as it is complete and accurate. Every informed reader will find omissions and occasional errors in his or her area of expertise; for the uninitiated, these volumes are of no value whatsoever.

BENTHAM, GEORGE. *George Bentham Autobiography, 1800-1834*. Edited by Marion Filipiuk. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997. Pp. xlviii + 597. $100.

Previously unpublished, this autobiography of the early life of George Bentham, nephew of the great Utilitarian philosopher Jeremy Bentham, offers a lively depiction of the times both in England and on the Continent, and particularly of post-Napoleonic France, where George Bentham lived with his family for twelve years. Both as his uncle's assistant for a while in London and as an emerging figure in the field of botany—where he would prove to be one of the great taxonomists of the century—his life during these years brought him into contact with some of the most interesting figures and movements of the day. A valuable resource, well edited, with thorough explanatory notes and useful indexes.

BERNSTEIN, SUSAN DAVID. *Confessional Subjects: Revelations of Gender and Power in Victorian Literature and Culture*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1997. Pp. xvi + 206. $39.95 cloth, $16.95 paper.

Charlotte Brontë's *Villette*, Mary Elizabeth Braddon's *Lady Audley's Secret*, George Eliot's *Daniel Deronda*, and Thomas Hardy's *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* are the primary texts examined in this study of the gendered power relationships embedded in confessional literature of the Victorian period.

BESSERMAN, LAWRENCE, ed. *The Challenge of Periodization: Old Paradigms and New Perspectives*. New York: Garland Publishing, 1996. Pp. xxiv + 241. $46.

Among these thirteen essays—most of which were initially presented as lectures in the workshop on periodization held under the auspices of the Center for Literary Studies at The Hebrew University of Jerusalem between 1991 and 1993—are several that will be of special interest to our readers: Sanford Budick's "Counter-Periodization and Chiasmus: The Case of Wordsworth and 'the days of Dryden and Pope,'" Robert J. Griffin's "A Critique of Romantic Periodization," Geoffrey H. Hartman's "A Project for the Sun," Jerome J. McGann's "Rethinking Romanticism," and H. M. Daleski's "Thomas Hardy: A Victorian Modernist?"

BRADLEY, J. L. *A Ruskin Chronology*. Author Chronologies Series. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997. Pp. xii + 129. $49.95.

For 2 June 1859: "(Thurs) Writes Mrs John Simon from Munster about German food and how one is fed 'everything you can think of that one can't eat

BRONTË, CHARLOTTE, and EMILY BRONTË *The Belgian Essays A Critical Edition* Edited and translated by Sue Lonoff New Haven Yale University Press, 1996 Pp xc + 467 $35

This handsome edition includes every known essay that the Brontë sisters wrote while studying in Belgium under Constantin Heger in 1842, as well as essays that Charlotte produced on a return trip in 1843 Nine of these twenty-eight youthful essays have never been published before Each *devoir* appears both in the original French complete with Heger's markings and corrections, and in Lonoff's translation

BROWN, HOMER OBED *Institutions of the English Novel From Defoe to Scott* Philadelphia University of Pennsylvania Press, 1997 Pp xxiv + 228 $29 95

Scott's work figured prominently, according to this study, in the rise of the novel to institutional status in the early nineteenth century Until that time, prose fiction was not perceived as a recognized single "genre," and the fictions of Defoe, Richardson, and Fielding only became recognized as novels "by means of retrospective histories that made them seem inaugural and exemplary at once"

BURLINGAME, ROGER *Of Making Many Books A Hundred Years of Reading, Writing, and Publishing* Penn State Reprints in Book History Series University Park Pennsylvania State University Press, 1996 Pp xxxvi + 347 $50 cloth, $19 95 paper

Out of print for many years, this classic history of the publishing house of Charles Scribner's Sons, first published in the firm's centennial year in 1946, is now reissued on the 150th anniversary of the founding of the house with an introduction by Charles Scribner III

CARR, HELEN *Inventing the American Primitive Politics, Gender, and the Representation of Native American Literary Traditions, 1789–1936* New York New York University Press, 1996 Pp x + 286 $50 cloth, $20 paper

Drawing upon both literary and anthropological works, this study illustrates how responses to the existence of Native-American traditions have shaped ideas of American identity and American literature Those literary figures receiving more than passing interest include Sarah Wentworth Morton, Longfellow, and Mary Austin

CONRAD, JOSEPH *The Collected Letters of Joseph Conrad, Volume 5 1912–1916* Edited by Frederick R Karl and Laurence Davies Cambridge Cambridge University Press, 1996 Pp lx + 721 $120

Commercial success with the publication of *Chance* (1914) and the composition of *Victory* (1915) and *The Shadow-Line* (1917) are among the literary events in Conrad's life at this time, viewed against a background of conflict—both within Conrad, who feared the loss of creative power, and without, as the world was transformed by world war Three more volumes of letters are scheduled to follow

COSSLETT, TESS, ed *Victorian Women Poets* Longman Critical Readers Series New York Longman, 1996 Pp x + 286 $50 95 cloth, $20 95 paper

Fifteen previously published essays on the works of Emily Bronte, Elizabeth Barrett Browning, Christina Rossetti, and Michael Field

COX, JOSEPH T, ed *The Written Wars American War Prose Through the Civil War* North Haven, Conn Archon Books, 1996 Pp xviii + 282 $39 50

These thirty-nine accounts of or about American war experiences—beginning with Captain John Smith and ending with the younger Oliver Wendell Holmes—explore reactions to war made, waged, and justified by Americans through the Civil War period For each of the five eras—the colonial period, the Revolutionary War, the War of 1812, the War with Mexico, and the Civil War—the editor provides general summaries (including chronologies) and helpful headnotes to individual selections

FENNELL, FRANCIS L, ed *Rereading Hopkins Selected New Essays* ELS Monograph Series, no 69 Victoria, B C English Literary Studies, University of Victoria, 1996 Pp 194 $10 50 CDN paper

Eleven wide-ranging essays that provide convincing testimony of the rewarding appeal of Hopkins's poetry to a variety of critical approaches

FITZGERALD, EDWARD *Rubáiyát of Omar Khayyam A Critical Edition* Edited by Christopher Decker Victorian Literature and Culture Series Charlottesville University Press of Virginia, 1997 Pp lxxiv + 258 $42 50

Appearing in four significantly revised editions during FitzGerald's lifetime (there are in addition some manuscript and proof versions of the text), the enormously popular *Rubaiyat* presents the textual editor with unusual challenges, and it presents modern textual theory with an occasion to see how useful its practices and procedures are in providing readers with a meaningful archaeology of the text Christopher Decker has seized the opportunity with intelligence enormous labor, and great editorial care, and his edition (which includes critical texts of each separate edition—1859, 1868 1872, and 1879) is a model of contemporary textual scholarship

FRANCESCHINA, JOHN, ed *Sisters of Gore Seven Gothic Melodramas by British Women, 1790–1843* New York Garland Publishing, 1997 Pp x + 466 $65

The plays by the six women authors reprinted in this anthology were written during the heyday of Gothic melodrama, the half-century between 1790 and 1840 They include Miss Burke's *The Ward of the Castle* (1793), Harriet Lee's *The Mysterious Marriage* (1798), Jane Scott's *The Old Oak Chest* (1816) Margaret Harvey's *Raymond de Percy* (1822), Elizabeth Polack's *St Clair of the Isles* (1838), and two works by Catherine Gore, *The Bond* (1824) and *Dacre of the South* (1840) A useful appendix lists all of the known Gothic melodramas or mixed-genre plays by British women writers (along with the dates of their first performances) written during this same period

FREEMAN, MARY WILKINS. *A Mary Wilkins Freeman Reader*. Edited by Mary R. Reichardt. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1997. Pp. xxii + 428. $65 cloth; $25 paper.

This volume of twenty-eight stories is the first to provide a representative sample of Freeman's best work, from all phases of her career. It makes plain why Freeman (in the words of editor Reichardt) is widely recognized as an important figure "in the history of American women's fiction . . . and the development of the American short story."

FULFORD, TIM. *Landscape, Liberty, and Authority: Poetry, Criticism, and Politics from Thomson to Wordsworth*. Cambridge Studies in Eighteenth-Century English Literature and Thought Series, no. 30. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996. Pp. xiv + 251. $54.95.

During a period of growing imperial power and rapid economic change, landscape description in the writings of Thomas, Cowper, Johnson, Gilpin, Repton, Wordsworth, Coleridge, and others reveals the tensions that arose as writers struggled for authority over the public sphere and sought to redefine the nature of that authority.

GENET, JACQUELINE, ed. *Rural Ireland, Real Ireland?* Irish Literary Studies Series, no. 49. Gerrards Cross, England: Colin Smythe, 1996. Pp. 245. $49.95.

The portrayal of rural Ireland in literature from the eighteenth century to present times is the subject of this collection of essays, which includes discussions of Maria Edgeworth, Lady Morgan, William Carleton, Charles J. Kickham, Lady Gregory, and Douglas Hyde as representative nineteenth-century voices.

GIKANDI, SIMON. *Maps of Englishness: Writing Identity in the Culture of Colonialism*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1996. Pp. xxiv + 268. $49.50 cloth; $17.50 paper.

Explores those ways in which the growth of the British Empire during the nineteenth century contributed to a reinvention of the concept of Englishness. By focusing on the works of such authors as Trollope, Carlyle, Mary Kingsley, Mary Seacole, Joseph Conrad, and more recent writers whose imaginations became engaged with the imperial project, the author of this thoughtful study analyzes, among other matters, how the colonial experience inspired certain narrative forms that changed the nature of English identity.

GIVENS, TERRYL L. *The Viper on the Hearth: Mormons, Myths, and the Construction of Heresy*. Religion in America Series. New York: Oxford University Press, 1997. Pp. x + 205. $35.

This examination of the representations of the Mormon phenomenon in popular literature of the nineteenth century—such fictional genres as mysteries, westerns, and romances—reveals dynamic ironies in the developing American body politic that sought to distance itself from a creation that mirrored so many of its basic values and assumptions.

GUNNING, SANDRA. *Race, Rape, and Lynching: The Red Record of American Literature, 1890–1912.* Race and American Culture Series. New York: Oxford University Press, 1996. Pp. xii + 195. $35.

Examines "the similar and dissimilar ways" in which, as such writers as Charles W. Chesnutt, Kate Chopin, Thomas Dixon, David Bryant Fulton, Pauline Hopkins, Mark Twain, and Ida B. Wells "addressed the phenomena of lynching and white mob violence for which the trope of the black-male-as-rapist was a precondition, they simultaneously referenced post-Reconstruction anxieties about identity, sexuality, citizenship, and social change."

HAMMOND, J. R. *A Robert Louis Stevenson Chronology.* Author Chronologies Series. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997. Pp. xvi + 101. $45.

Provides in a fairly convenient manner information on Stevenson's literary activities, movements, and moods, though most students and admirers of the writer will still desire access to the splendid collection of his letters edited by Bradford A. Booth and Ernest Mehew (1994) for elaboration upon details encountered here.

HOWE, ELISABETH A. *The Dramatic Monologue.* Studies in Literary Themes and Genres Series, no. 10. New York: Twayne Publishers, 1996. Pp. xx + 166. $24.95.

The author of this attractive study considers first in an "overview" chapter the origins of the dramatic monologue along with its defining characteristics and aesthetic dimensions. She then looks at the form in Victorian literature, offering close readings of Browning's "The Bishop Orders His Tomb" and Tennyson's "Tithonus." Later chapters include detailed analyses of dramatic monologues by twentieth-century poets, including Pound, T. S. Eliot, Frost, and Jarrell.

JORDAN, ELAINE, ed. *Joseph Conrad.* New Casebooks Series. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1996. Pp. x + 227. $45.

Following the editor's introductory essay on "Reading Conrad," eleven essays originally published between 1979 and 1993 (most of them extracts from book-length studies) provide critically diverse points of view on *Heart of Darkness*, *Nostromo*, and *The Secret Agent*.

KORNFELD, EVE. *Margaret Fuller: A Brief Biography with Documents.* The Bedford Series in History and Culture. New York: Bedford Books, 1997. Pp. xvi + 252. $35.

The biographical sketch constitutes slightly less than one-third of the volume; the remainder is devoted to a reprinting of Fuller's letters, poetry, journalism, and literary criticism, along with contemporary responses to her work. The selections are judicious and the annotations helpful.

LABRIE, ROSS. *The Catholic Imagination in American Literature.* Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1997. Pp. xii + 306. $39.95.

The only nineteenth-century author dealt with at length in this study of the imaginations and sensibilities of American Catholic writers is Orestes Brownson. Caroline Gordon, Allen Tate, Paul Horgan, William Everson, Thomas Merton, Walker Percy, Robert Lowell, J. F. Powers, Daniel Berrigan, Flannery O'Connor, Ralph McInerny, and Mary Gordon are the twentieth-century writers discussed.

LADD, BARBARA. *Nationalism and the Color Line in George W. Cable, Mark Twain, and William Faulkner.* Southern Literary Studies Series. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1996. Pp. xxiv + 197. $30.

Argues that writers like Cable (in *The Grandissimes*), Mark Twain (in *Pudd'nhead Wilson*), and Faulkner (in *Light in August* and *Absalom, Absalom!*) cannot be read exclusively within the context of a nationalistically defined "American" literature but must also be understood in terms of the cultural legacy that French and Spanish colonialism bestowed on the Deep South and the Mississippi River Valley, specifically with respect to the very different ways these colonialist cultures conceptualized race, color, and nationality.

LUBITZ, RITA. *Marital Power in Dickens' Fiction.* Dickens' Universe Series, vol. 3. New York: Peter Lang, 1996. Pp. xii + 146. $39.95.

A comprehensive survey of marriage in Dickens's fiction showing how the success or failure of a marriage is intrinsically linked to the control or abuse of power in the relationship.

MCMASTER, JULIET. *Jane Austen the Novelist: Essays Past and Present.* New York: St. Martin's Press, 1996. Pp. xiv + 203. $49.95.

Eight of these eleven essays written during the past twenty-five years by a member of the Advisory Board of *NCL* have been printed before, another was delivered as a lecture, and two are new to this volume. Brought together now, they are a refreshing testimony of one critic's masterly engagement with Austen's fiction.

MCMASTER, JULIET, and BRUCE STOVEL, eds. *Jane Austen's Business: Her World and Her Profession.* New York: St. Martin's Press, 1996. Pp. xx + 237. $49.95.

Most of these fifteen essays were first written for the meeting of the Jane Austen Society of North America held at Lake Louise in 1993; among them contributions by Julia Prewitt Brown, Edward Copeland, Jan Fergus, Isobel Grundy, Gary Kelly, Jane Millgate, and Elaine Showalter. Also included is a short story by Margaret Drabble that updates the romance of Anne Elliot of Kellynch Hall to our own times.

Mahoney, John L. *William Wordsworth: A Poetic Life.* New York: Fordham University Press, 1997. Pp. xxviii + 301. $32 cloth, $17 paper.

A very readable literary life that focuses upon what finally is most important to readers of Wordsworth's poetry. In its reading of key events and representative works of the poet, the study draws usefully upon scholarship and criticism of the last several decades.

Markwick, Margaret. *Trollope and Women.* London and Rio Grande, Ohio: Hambledon Press, 1997. Pp. xii + 218. $40.

A refreshingly appreciative study of the feminine world depicted by Trollope, reminding us that for many readers his characters still have moral substance and intellectual relevance as realistic portraits of ways of being in the world.

Mezei, Kathy, ed. *Ambiguous Discourse: Feminist Narratology and British Women Writers.* Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996. Pp. x + 286. $39.95 cloth, $16.95 paper.

This collection of twelve essays whose common concern is an understanding of feminist narratology (i.e., the combination of feminist theory with the study of the structures that underpin all narratives), includes several discussions of Jane Austen's novels.

Moreland, Kim. *The Medievalist Impulse in American Literature: Twain, Adams, Fitzgerald, and Hemingway.* Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1996. Pp. xiv + 264. $42.50.

This engaging study argues that the works of these four authors reveal most powerfully the ways in which nineteenth- and twentieth-century writers nostalgically appropriated the ideals of courtly love and chivalry, viewing them as superior to the materialism of modern civilization at a time of radical change and social disruption.

Mott, Wesley T., and Robert E. Burkholder, eds. *Emersonian Circles: Essays in Honor of Joel Myerson.* Rochester, N.Y.: University of Rochester Press, 1997. Pp. xii + 284. $59.95.

A distinguished collection of essays whose contributors include Ronald A. Bosco, Lawrence Buell, Larry A. Carlson, Phyllis Cole, Gary Collison, Helen R. Deese, Len Gougeon, Philip F. Gura, Kent P. Ljungquist, Robert D. Richardson, Jr., David M. Robinson, Daniel Shealy, Frank Shuffelton, and Albert J. von Frank.

MOYLAN, MICHELE, and LANE STILES, eds. *Reading Books: Essays on the Material Text and Literature in America.* Foreword by Michael Winship. Studies in Print Culture and the History of the Book Series. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1996. Pp. xii + 288. $50 cloth; $16.95 paper.

As Michael Winship wisely reminds us in his foreword to this important collection of essays, "The literary marketplace may have emerged as an important cultural metaphor in the antebellum years, but let us not forget that simultaneously authors and publishers found themselves caught up in the real marketplaces with their texts—ones where money, credit, and goods were exchanged." Among the authors and topics discussed are Melville, Hawthorne, Mark Twain, Helen Hunt Jackson, and the appearance of literature in family antebellum newspapers, along with several essays on the publishing firms of Ticknor and Fields, Houghton Mifflin, and the Leipzig purveyor of English and American texts, Bernhard Tauchnitz.

MYERSON, JOEL, ed. *Studies in the American Renaissance, 1996.* Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1996. Pp. x + 406. $50.

The final volume in a distinguished series that during the past two decades has published 265 articles by 174 contributors, a total of approximately 8,500 pages of important scholarship, particularly textual and bibliographical work that has extended our understanding of mid-nineteenth-century literary and intellectual life in America in substantial ways. This current volume is no exception, containing work that will be of considerable interest to students of Hawthorne, Thoreau, and Margaret Fuller.

NORRIS, FRANK. *McTeague: A Story of San Francisco: Authoritative Text, Contexts, Criticism. Second Edition.* Edited by Donald Pizer. Norton Critical Editions Series. New York: W. W. Norton, 1997. Pp. xiv + 414.

The "modern criticism" section of this second edition has been thoroughly updated with the reprinting of six recent essays on Norris's novel, guaranteeing that this valuable sourcebook will continue to serve with distinction several more generations of students and admirers.

OREL, HAROLD, ed. *The Brontës: Interviews and Recollections.* Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1997. Pp. xviii + 221. $24.95.

This compilation includes forty selections from books and periodicals—many of them never reprinted before in their entirety—that cast light upon the personalities and activities of the Reverend Patrick Brontë, his son, Branwell, and his three daughters, Charlotte, Emily, and Anne. Arranged chronologically, the volume begins with T. Wemyss Reid's recollections of "the little family" of the Brontës and ends with C. Holmes Cautley's interviews with "old Haworth folk who knew the Brontës." Among the many contributors are William Makepeace Thackeray, Harriet Martineau, Elizabeth Gaskell, and the Brontës themselves.

ORZECK, MARTIN, and ROBERT WEISBUCH, eds *Dickinson and Audience* Ann Arbor University of Michigan Press, 1996 Pp viii + 280 $49 50

This volume of twelve essays is the first book exclusively focused on Dickinson's relation to audience—from the relatively few personal friends who received many of the poems to that vast, unseen, yet somehow specific "other" that any literary work addresses With contributions from Willis J Buckingham, Karen Dandurand, Betsy Erkkila, Virginia Jackson, Charlotte Nekola Martin Orzeck, David Porter, Robert Regan, Richard B Sewall R McClure Smith, Stephanie A Tingley and Robert Weisbuch, the collection boasts a wide variety of critical approaches to the poet and her works—from traditional biographical and historical analyses to deconstructionist, feminist, and reader-response interpretations

PETRY, ALICE HALL, ed *Critical Essays on Kate Chopin* Critical Essays on American Literature Series New York G K Hall, 1996 Pp xiv + 257 $47

Contemporary reviews of Chopin's writings together with more recent criticism including seven original essays by Linda Wagner-Martin Nancy A Walker Heather Kirk Thomas, Kathryn Lee Seidel, Priscilla Leder Lawrence I Berkove, and Margaret D Bauer

PIZER, DONALD, ed *The Cambridge Companion to American Realism and Naturalism Howells to London* Cambridge Companions to Literature Series Cambridge Cambridge University Press, 1995 Pp xvi + 287 $59 95 cloth, $17 95 paper

Contributors to this volume edited by a member of the Advisory Board of *NCL* include Elizabeth Ammons Michael Anesko Louis J Budd John W Crowley, Blanche H Gelfant Barbara Hochman, Richard Lehan J C Levenson, Tom Quirk, Jacqueline Tavernier-Courbin and Kenneth W Warren

RIMER, ROSALIND *Printers and Men of Capital Philadelphia Book Publishers in the New Republic* Early American Studies Series Philadelphia University of Pennsylvania Press, 1996 Pp xvi + 210 $34 95

This well-researched and thoughtful case study of the Philadelphia book trade between 1790 and 1805 vividly demonstrates the structure and development of the postrevolutionary economy and illuminates the early emergence of the book as an integral part of American culture

SAITO, NOBORU *The Literary Pilgrimage of Nathaniel Hawthorne* Tokyo Bunka Shobo Hakubun-Sha, 1996 Pp ix + 273

Two focuses of this critical study are noteworthy first, the influence of Hawthorne's English years upon his imagination and later literary work second, the response of Japanese readers and critics to Hawthorne's work An interesting appendix—"Hawthorne's Literary Guide to England"—provides photographic illustrations together with passages from his English Notebooks

SCHEESE, DON *Nature Writing The Pastoral Impulse in America* Studies in Literary Themes and Genres Series, no 7 New York Twayne Publishers, 1996 Pp xxii + 227 $24 95

This highly personal study traces the long evolution of nature writing as a genre in American literature, against which is placed close readings of key texts by Thoreau, Muir, Mary Austin, and others

SCHMITT, CANNON *Alien Nation Nineteenth-Century Gothic Fictions and English Nationality* New Cultural Studies Series Philadelphia University of Pennsylvania Press, 1997 Pp xii + 219 $34 50

Contesting the notion of the Gothic's subversiveness, Schmitt in his reading of such classics of the Gothic as Ann Radcliffe s *The Italian*, Thomas De Quincey's Gothic autobiography *Confessions of an English Opium Eater*, Charlotte Bronte s *Villette*, Wilkie Collins's *The Woman in White*, and Bram Stoker's *Dracula*, examines the ways in which Gothic narrative provided the generic space for the construction of a distinctive notion of "Englishness" in a period of xenophobia and foreign expansion

SCHUYLER, DAVID *Apostle of Taste Andrew Jackson Downing, 1815-1852* Creating the North American Landscape Series Baltimore Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996 Pp xiv + 290 $35 95

The first full-length critical biography of the horticulturist, landscape gardener, and prolific writer on architecture who, more than any other individual, shaped middle-class taste in the United States in the two decades prior to the Civil War

SHAW, BERNARD *Bernard Shaw's Book Reviews, Volume 2 1884–1950* Edited by Brian Tyson University Park Pennsylvania State University Press, 1996 Pp xii + 588 $115

A companion volume to Tyson's previously edited collection of Shaw s earlier book reviews, the seventy-three reviews gathered here (of which thirty date from the 1880s and 1890s) deal with a great variety of subjects But since many of them are political in nature and deal with topics as fleeting as yesterday's headlines, readers will appreciate the editor's thorough and always helpful annotations

SHAW, HARRY E , ed *Critical Essays on Sir Walter Scott The Waverley Novels* Critical Essays on British Literature Series New York G K Hall, 1996 Pp xii + 222 $47

All thirteen of these essays have been published before (mostly during the last two decades), but it is useful and revealing to have them brought together in one volume

SMITH, JOHANNA M. *Mary Shelley.* Twayne's English Authors Series, no. 526. New York: Twayne Publishers, 1996. Pp. xvi + 197. $24.95.

Though Shelley will always be remembered as the author of *Frankenstein* and as the wife of Percy Bysshe Shelley, this comprehensive study reminds us of the diversity and depth of her literary career, manifested in many genres—including poetry, drama, travel writing, and essays, in addition to prose fiction—and richly engaged in important political and feminist issues of the first half of the nineteenth century.

STEVICK, PHILIP. *Imagining Philadelphia: Travelers' Views of the City from 1800 to the Present.* Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1996. Pp. xii + 204. $22.95.

A clever and thoroughly satisfying survey of the ways that "the city of brotherly love" has "inscribed itself on the imaginations" of visitors during the last two centuries, "ways that are often compelling but unpredictable, a parallel city to the place on the map and the street under foot, a city of the mind, an imagined Philadelphia."

SUTTON, MARTIN. *The Sin-Complex: A Critical Study of English Versions of the Grimms' "Kinder- und Hausmärchen" in the Nineteenth Century.* Schriften der Brüder Grimm-Gesellschaft, band 28. Kassel: Brüder Grimm-Gesellschaft, 1996. Pp. viii + 351. 98 DM.

According to this most revealing comparative study, any tale in the collections of the Brothers Grimm that touched on the issues of religious belief and superstition, the human body and its physical nature, violence and evil, and the intense emotions felt by human beings that prompt them to commit violent and destructive acts was inevitably viewed with concern and mistrust by English translators, who in their renderings of these stories made major concessions to local prejudices and popular mores.

THACKERAY, WILLIAM MAKEPEACE. *Selected Letters of William Makepeace Thackeray.* Edited by Edgar F. Harden. New York: New York University Press, 1996. Pp. xxxvi + 416. $60.

These two hundred and seventy-seven letters have been selected for "their ability to convey the essential biographical developments of a very interesting life, and their ability to represent highly characteristic verbal and pictorial expressions of a great man of letters." None of these documents are newly discovered (Harden already provided a two-volume supplement in 1994 to Gordon Ray's four-volume edition of Thackeray's *Letters and Private Papers*), but the handsome format in which they are here presented will serve well the needs of many readers.

TRELA, D. J., and RODGER L. TARR, eds. *The Critical Response to Thomas Carlyle's Major Works.* Critical Responses in Arts and Letters Series, no. 27. Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1997. Pp. xiv + 205. $59.95.

This volume presents some of the most inaccessible and some of the best critical opinion—mostly contemporary reviews and earlier essays—dealing with four of Carlyle's major works: *Sartor Resartus, The French Revolution, On Heroes, Hero-Worship, and the Heroic in History*, and *Past and Present*.

WEST, SHEARER, ed. *The Victorians and Race.* Brookfield, Vt.: Scolar Press, 1996. Pp. xvi + 249. $76.95.

Wide-ranging and repeatedly insightful, these thirteen essays provide a rich variety of interdisciplinary reconsiderations of Victorian discourses of race as represented through visual culture (including discussions of such artists as Mulready, Winterhalter, and the Langham Place Group) and both canonic and noncanonic literary texts (by such writers as Dickens, Schreiner, and Bulwer Lytton).

WILLIAMS, WILLIAM H. A. *'Twas Only an Irishman's Dream: The Image of Ireland and the Irish in American Popular Song Lyrics, 1800–1920.* Music in American Life Series. Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1996. Pp. xiv + 311. $42.50 cloth, $17.95 paper.

Some seven hundred pieces of sheet music form the basis of this intriguing study of the diverse images of Ireland and the Irish in the United States during the period in which five million Irish men and women crossed the Atlantic and negotiated their identity within the evolving American society.

WINNIFRITH, THOMAS JOHN, ed. *Critical Essays on Emily Brontë.* Critical Essays on British Literature Series. New York: G. K. Hall, 1997. Pp. xiv + 272. $47.

This very judicious and thoughtfully organized selection of criticism focuses upon the biography of Emily Brontë, her poetry, and, of course, *Wuthering Heights*. Realizing the impossibility of finding several recent essays that could suggest by themselves the great variety of critical responses to the novel, the editor has wisely asked Gillian Frith to write a review of the critical response to this work during the past two decades (1975–1995).

Commentary

The seventh annual Conference on Eighteenth- and Nineteenth-Century British Women Writers will be held 26–28 March 1998 at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. The theme of this year's conference is "Reading and Teaching Eighteenth- and Nineteenth-Century British Women Writers," and it will feature keynote addresses by Nancy Armstrong, Stuart Curran, and Isobel Armstrong. For further information, please contact Marva DeVoto, Beth Dolan Kautz, Michelle Mouton, or Julia Straight at the Department of English, CB#3520, Greenlaw Hall, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, NC 27514, or e-mail: bwwconf@unc.edu. Or visit their web page at http://www.unc.edu/depts/bwwconf/home.html

Interdisciplinary Nineteenth-Century Studies (INCS) announces its upcoming conference on "Nineteenth-Century Money and Culture," to be held 17–18 April 1998 at Loyola University, New Orleans. The deadline for 200-word abstracts is 15 October 1997. For further information, please contact Richard Johnson, Department of English, Loyola University, New Orleans, La. 70118, or e-mail: rjohnson@beta.loyno.edu. Their website address is http://www.nd.edu/~ncshp/cfp.html

Contributors to this Issue

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MARGARET CASE CROSKERY is a Doctoral Candidate in the Department of English at the University of Virginia. She is currently writing her dissertation on Eliza Haywood and Sarah Fielding.

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MARY SARACINO ZBORAY is an independent scholar in Atlanta, Georgia. Her articles, coauthored with Ronald J. Zboray, have appeared in *Journalism History* (1996) and *American Quarterly* (1996), and others are forthcoming in *Libraries and Culture* (1997) and *Journal of the Early Republic* (1997). She is now at work, also with Ronald J. Zboray, on several studies of antebellum New England, including a book on the experience of reading there, along with studies on women's political culture. They are also working on a book-length directory of the Boston book trades from 1789 to 1861.

RONALD J. ZBORAY is Associate Professor of History at Georgia State University. In addition to his research coauthored with Mary Saracino Zboray, he is the author of *A Fictive People: Antebellum Economic Development and the American Reading Public* (1993).

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JOHN GLAVIN is Associate Professor of English at Georgetown University. A playwright and literary critic, he has published articles on Dickens and on Shakespeare, and he recently completed "After Dickens," a book-length study of Dickensian theatricality and adaptation.

ANTHONY JOHN HARDING, Professor of English at the University of Saskatchewan, is the author of *Coleridge and the Inspired Word* (1985) and *The Reception of Myth in English Romanticism* (1995), and coeditor of *Milton, the Metaphysicals, and Romanticism* (1994). He is a recent recipient of a visiting fellowship at Clare Hall, Cambridge, and a Sidney Holgate Fellowship at Grey College, University of Durham, and he is currently editing volume 5 of *The Notebooks of Samuel Taylor Coleridge* for the Princeton series.

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Abstracts

Jason Mauro, "The Shape of Despair: Structure and Vision in Keats's 'Ode on a Grecian Urn'" (pp. 289–301)

According to Karl Kroeber and Stuart M. Sperry, Keats languished in the gap between the "audience" he had achieved as a poet and the "community" he longed for. This, claims Kroeber, is the fate of all Western artists, who are doomed merely to report "dream material" to an audience of witnesses rather than to transfer a "vision" to a community that can enact it and derive social cohesion and "energy" from it. As I examine the structural underpinnings of Keats's ode, however, I find that it both enables and provides a location for a ritual transformation of the reader as an active participant. As readers of the ode, we are escorted through a rite of passage that has the shape of what anthropologist Victor Turner has called a "liminal" transition. According to Turner, such "liminal" transitions, passages in which individuals suffer both disintegration and reintegration, are the means by which people are synthesized into a community. The "Ode on a Grecian Urn," then, stands apart from Kroeber's lament that Western art can only serve to draw "energy" from an audience. The ode transfers visionary energy to a community of readers.

W. David Shaw, "Lyric Displacement in the Victorian Monologue: Naturalizing the Vocative" (pp. 302–325)

Though a venerable lyric tradition of apostrophizing the breeze, the dawn, or the nightingale celebrates the Romantic poet's words of power, only inmates of mental hospitals actually talk to birds, trees, or doors—much less to holes in a wall, as Pound's speaker does in "Marvoil." This essay shows how Victorian dramatic monologues substitute human auditors for nonhuman ones in an effort to naturalize a convention that nineteenth-century poets find increasingly obsolete and archaic. Instead of talking to the dawn, Tennyson's Tithonus addresses a beautiful woman, the goddess who becomes the silent auditor of his dramatic monologue. Like Coleridge's conversation poems, Browning's and Tennyson's monologues are poems of one-sided conversation in which a speaker's address to a silent auditor replaces Shelley's vocatives of direct address to the west wind or Keats's apostrophes to autumn. In recuperating an archaic convention of lyric apostrophe by humanizing the object addressed, the Victorian dramatic monologue illustrates John Keble's theory of the mechanisms by which genres are disturbed, displaced, and transformed. The dramatic monologue becomes an ascendant genre in post-Romantic literature partly because it is better equipped than lyric poetry to oppose the dogmas of a secular and scientific age in which an antiquated belief in "doing-by-saying" (including a belief in oracles, prophecies, and knowledge as divination) is in rapid and widespread retreat.

Edgar A. Dryden, "*John Marr and Other Sailors*: Poetry as Private Utterance" (pp. 326–349)

John Marr and Other Sailors (1888) movingly figures Melville's sense of his own situation as an aging poet alienated from his social, political, and literary milieu. By way of a

close reading of the individual poems, I show that poetry for Melville is a private self-directed and ironic art one whose primary activity is an ironic elicitation of subversive latent meanings. In the face of the "vague reserve of heaven" and the apathy of nature and working with a deep distrust of public performance and the printed page, Melville as poet at once exposes and stubbornly, if privately and obscurely, celebrates the nature of the literary as such.

Sharon Aronofsky Weltman, "Mythic Language and Gender Subversion: The Case of Ruskin's Athena" (pp. 350–371)

Ruskin's complex attitude toward women has long been important to feminist and Victorian studies; over a quarter-century ago Kate Millett published *Sexual Politics* and its famous attack on Ruskin's essay "Of Queens' Gardens." She charged Ruskin with promoting a sugar-coated but perfidious system of separate spheres for men and women. Yet shortly after Ruskin produced that idealized vision of housewife-queens in 1865, he created a new ideal queen in his mythological study *The Queen of the Air* (1869), this time elaborated from Athena. Through his mythopoesis Ruskin disrupts both conventional gender categories and his own implication in them. Ruskin presents a series of binary oppositions that he immediately conflates: Athena and Medusa, air and earth, bird and snake, formation and destruction, science and myth, male and female. Ruskin documents the instability of his oppositions through a bizarre "natural language" where real-life creatures such as birds and snakes serve as eternal hieroglyphs signifying universally recognizable abstractions. That seemingly fixed signs in Athena's hieroglyphic code inevitably change is clear from Ruskin's acknowledgment of Darwin's evolutionary theory. But evolution slips into a wild image of degenerative metamorphosis where all the divisions that Ruskin has so laboriously noted dissolve. Since Ruskin identifies Athena with each seemingly opposed animal signifier in his language of living hieroglyphs, he subverts all linguistic difference and ultimately feminizes signification itself. Through myth Ruskin creates a mutable language, one where genders as well as signs become mobile rather than fixed.

The Shape of Despair: Structure and Vision in Keats's "Ode on a Grecian Urn"

JASON MAURO

With sympathetic eyes Karl Kroeber sees Keats as a Western poet "dying of poetry," withering in the arid gap between the audience he had achieved and the community he longed for.[1] According to Kroeber, Keats's particular despair outlines the limits of all Western poetry, whose domain, in Stuart M. Sperry's terms, is the "dream" rather than the "vision." By comparing the dynamics of Keats's "Fall of Hyperion" to the Ojibwa "Deer Dancing Song," Kroeber claims that Keats was doomed by the traditions of Western poetry to the isolating activity of reporting dream material to an audience rather than transferring a visionary experience to a community:

> There was for [Keats], as for all Western poets, no social outlet through which to discharge the dangerous potency within his psyche. Publication, admiring friends, even wide popularity are not effective substitutes for the Indian's tribe. The tribe consists not in listeners or audience merely, but of cultural supporters who can physically aid the poet by giving a social form to the power speaking through him. (pp. 276–78)

[1] "Poem, Dream, and the Consuming of Culture," *Georgia Review*, 32 (1978), 276.

The tribe, as distinct from the audience, reproduces the dream, enacting it rather than merely admiring, reiterating, or critiquing it. According to Kroeber, the Ojibwa singer transfers "energy," a vision, to the tribe and thus forms a community, whereas Keats is doomed to draw energy and applause from his audience. The louder he shouts out the content of his dream, the more isolated he becomes.

I wonder though if the "Ode on a Grecian Urn" both encourages and provides a location for the kind of enactment that Kroeber reserves for non-Western poetry like the Ojibwa "Deer Dancing Song." I would like to suggest that Keats's ode is a site for a ritual transformation of the reader, where we are allowed to participate in a transformative vision rather than witness a poet's dream. The act of reading the poem is, I believe, energy producing rather than energy consuming (using Kroeber's terms), and I am encouraged to put the poem down after having read it rather than to critique or fetishize it. Of course, the act of writing this critique contradicts this assertion, but I wonder then if it is the traditions and necessities of Western criticism that delineate the breach between audience and community. I had the opportunity to teach this poem to a class called "Inventing Death," which was designed to investigate cross-cultural attitudes toward death and dying. Many of my dying students found this poem to be, to say the least, useful and transformative. The "Ode on a Grecian Urn," then, stands perhaps as an antidote to Kroeber's lament that "it is not easy to find any Western art that doesn't serve as a locus for collecting power to itself rather than passing it on into socially productive activity" (p. 280).

I would like first to discuss the kind of transformation undergone by the speaker of the poem, most specifically the trajectory of the speaker's response to despair through stanzas III and IV. Then, using Philip Fisher's concept of "nested frames" of reference within the ode, I would like to suggest how the reader is invited to be a communal participant in this transformation, not merely a witness. And finally, I would like to trace a parallel between the shape of the ode's trajectory and the outline of communal rites of transformation suggested by anthropologist Victor Turner.

Even the gesture, common in the criticism, of ascribing a geometric shape to the ode speaks to me of a participatory gesture, tracing a shape with a finger, placing a hand in a handprint. Helen Vendler presents a schematic of the poem's structural form, a triple "parabolic trajectory," with each curve representing the rise of the poet's aesthetic reverie and that reverie's eventual fall, brought about by the inexorable "fact of process."[2] Vendler holds that the fundamental outline of the poem "is that of a poet coming, in woe, to a work of art, interrogating it, and being solaced by it" (p. 131). The poet's initial woe is generated by "the transience of life itself" (p. 142), and, she argues, the urn serves as an antidote to that troubling transience. Thus the "Ode on a Grecian Urn" is for Vendler an exploration of how art can serve as a sharp rebuke to "the fact of process" (p. 126). Stuart M. Sperry, echoing Earl Wasserman, M.R.G. Spiller, and others, ascribes to the ode and to the urn a circular shape.[3]

The shape I find most descriptive of the radically transformative nature of the ode, however, is neither a circle nor a series of parabolas. More accurately, the ode inscribes a sine-wave, with five distinctive points along its length (see Fig. 1). First, the poet is steeped in despair brought about by the world's unrelenting flux; second, upon encountering the urn, he is filled with the hope that he has found an antidote to his despair; third, he finds that his hope is unfounded, that the antidote was no more than a placebo; fourth, as he more closely examines the urn, he finds that it embodies a terror far more intense than the despair from which he originally sought relief, that the placebo is in fact a poison; and finally, he embraces the transient condition of the world as an antidote to the terror inherent in the urn. The most distinguishing feature of the sine-wave, as distinct from a circle or a series of parabolas, is that the point of origin—the poet's initial despair *from* which he wishes to ascend—becomes the point of salvation *to* which, by the end of the ode, he wishes to climb.

Helen Vendler, *The Odes of John Keats* (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard Univ. Press, 1983), pp. 124–126.

See Stuart M. Sperry, *Keats the Poet* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1973), p. 270.

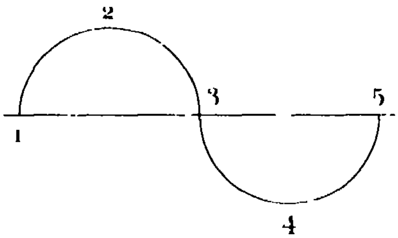


Fig. 1

Thus the urn does not solace the speaker by holding out to him an alternative to the "fact of process," but rather it compels him to embrace the process that he had initially sought to escape. The first and fifth points are thus empirically identical, each registering a cognitive awareness of the "fact of process," but they are phenomenologically distinct—the speaker is no longer the same in relation and in response to this awareness.

The first two points of the ode's progression, the speaker's despair and initial consolation, are generally agreed upon and require little comment. Although the poem begins with the speaker already before the urn, his prior despair and initial relief are revealed simultaneously in the first and second stanzas. His elation upon encountering trees that will never be bare and virginal beauty that will never fade points, of course, to his grief from being in a world of change and decay.

The third stanza severely qualifies the elation the speaker feels in stanza II. This third stanza has been the subject of intense critical debate. Most commentators agree that the poetry of this stanza is vastly inferior to the rest of the ode. Cleanth Brooks regards it as a "blemish" and a "falling-off" from the poetic grace of the other stanzas.[4] Vendler views the incessant repetition as "a form of babble," and she sees the stanza as the price paid for infusing poetry with the terms of propositional analysis (p. 138). Walter Jackson Bate feels that the language is, at best, "excessive."[5]

[4] Cleanth Brooks, "Keats's Sylvan Historian: History without Footnotes," in *Five Approaches of Literary Criticism: An Arrangement of Contemporary Critical Essays*, ed. Wilbur S. Scott (New York: Macmillan, 1962), p. 237.

[5] Walter Jackson Bate, *The Stylistic Development of Keats* (New York: Humanities Press, 1958), p. 140.

The nature of these weaknesses warrants further inspe tion. Not only is the third stanza internally repetitious, but th entire section is redundant, merely reiterating what has bee more gracefully covered in the second stanza and contributin nothing toward the poem's progress. It seems unlikely that Kea would be blind to the stanza's obvious weaknesses—that h who believed that "Poetry should be great & unobtrusive," would let stand such an obtrusive and distracting stanza, th he could not avoid using "happy" six times in five lines and "fo ever" five times in four lines.

As David A. Kent suggests, however, the redundancy an repetition within stanza III serve a crucial function in the od Repetition is the rhetorical equivalent of stasis. The lexical an syntactic repetition within the stanza further underscores ho tedious and ugly a suspension of process and motion could b "More happy love! more happy, happy love!"[7] Most critics hav assented in their cry of "please, no more!," yet this critical disgu enacts what Kent argues is the purpose of the internal repet tions. "In effect, the rhetoric of repetition destabilizes the asse tion of happiness."[8] M. R. G. Spiller's analysis of the final lines o stanza III also suggests that perhaps Keats was indeed intent o transferring to the reader the effect of his "excessive" languag

> the love on the urn is *above* human passion, but that passion itse has *high*-sorrowful effects. this lexical awkwardness is not the helped by a syntactic awkwardness. as lines 26–8 are parallel a jectival phrases describing "happy love" it is tempting because the lexical field of height, to take the following line, "That leav a heart high-sorrowful and cloyed," as also a parallel descripti line qualifying not, as it should, "human passion," but, as befor "happy love." With an uncomfortable absence of speech "with parching tongue," the stanza ends. Keats intended his speaker refer, we believe, to the fever of sexual passion, but textually it the figure of iteration ("happy . . . happy," "for ever . . . for ever"

[6] John Keats, *The Letters of John Keats, 1814–1821*, ed. Hyder Edward Rollins, 2 vo (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1958), I, 224.

John Keats, "Ode on a Grecian Urn," in *The Poems of John Keats*, ed. Jack Stilling (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard Univ. Press, 1978), p. 373, l. 25. Furth references to the poem are to this edition.

[8] David A. Kent, "On the Third Stanza of Keats's 'Ode on a Grecian Urn,'" *Kea Shelley Journal*, 36 (1987), 23.

> itself perhaps the syntactic equivalent of fever, which leads to repetitive speech and abrupt silences, that brings the parching tongue and the silence when the stanza ends.[9]

If, as Spiller suggests, it is the relentless repetition of "happy" and "for ever," the verse approximation of a frozen bas-relief, that results in "a heart high-sorrowful and cloyed, / A burning forehead, and a parching tongue" (ll. 29–30), then it is presumptuous to hold the inferior poetry of stanza III to be a "blemish." It may be "babble," but it is highly illustrative babble, intended to cloy, burn, and parch the reader. The effect is to transfer to the reader, against the speaker's assertions, the manic, feverish affect to which the vision has brought the speaker.

There is another kind of repetition within the ode that also warrants our attention. Stanza II is a first iteration of the material repeated in stanza III, and it serves to illustrate in verse the static nature of the bas-relief scene on the urn. The lover makes no progress toward consummating his love, and the poem makes no progress toward its dramatic fulfillment. The only more effective way for Keats to have illustrated the suspension of motion would have been to make stanza III a verbatim repetition of stanza II. Of course, as many commentators have conceded, such heavy-handed repetition makes for bad poetry. But Keats uses bad poetry in this case to great effect, demonstrating the consequences of trying to step outside the world of process.

If acts and attitudes of bliss, beauty, and love—deprived of process—turn ugly, then what happens to acts and attitudes of desolation and despair? The third scene on the urn holds out to the speaker the monstrous spectacle of fear and desolation eternally held in suspension. The sacrificial heifer, like her maiden counterpart in the second stanza, awaits a consummation that will never come. Her desperate lowing will continue into eternity.

Keats explores in this fourth stanza what becomes of a processional devoid of process: a general leveling occurs. What distinguishes animate from inanimate entities is gone, and Keats therefore devotes all of his pathos and sympathy not to the

[9] M. R. G. Spiller, "Circularity and Silence in the 'Grecian Urn,'" *Durham University Journal*, 80 (1987), 55.

people but to the inanimate fixtures of the scene, to the streets, citadel, and town. What was originally a poem about a man in despair seeking solace from an object is perverted, in the final lines of the stanza, to streets and buildings in despair, in need of consolation:

> And, little town, thy streets for evermore
> Will silent be; and not a soul to tell
> Why thou art desolate, can e'er return.
>
> (ll. 38–40)

With the "why" of the final line left unresolved, the sacrifice is severed from the ties of process and community ritual that justify and sanction it. The processional becomes a weird tableau; humans become fixtures, fixtures become human. The speaker's perspective becomes confused between the animate and inanimate, having lost sight of the processional's origins, destination, and motivation, all rooted in process. We watch him become transmuted to a hybrid between a human and a thing, a heifer, left dangling in fear and desolation, without reason and without hope of abatement.

It is in this sense that the speaker accuses the urn of "teas[ing] us out of thought" (l. 44). Human thought depends on the felt continuity between action and motivation, between feeling and origin. The frozen perspective of the urn shatters that continuity, relegating the speaker's perspective to that of a beast whose "thought" is perpetually present tense. The tone of the final stanza is therefore justifiably indignant. How far the speaker has come from his opening epithets ("Thou still unravish'd bride of quietness, / Thou foster-child of silence and slow time" [ll. 1–2]) to his closing expostulations ("O Attic shape! Fair attitude! with brede / Of marble men and maidens overwrought" [ll. 41–42]). "Happy boughs" (l. 21) and "leaf-fringed legend" (l. 5) have been reduced to "forest branches" and "the trodden weed" (l. 43). The speaker's initial infatuation with the urn has become barely concealed contempt. He has awakened from his spell of the previous stanza with a vengeance, and he is intent upon making the urn a mere object again—an object of his thought, not his thought itself. His use of the word "brede" to describe the figures on the urn suggests an attempt to dis-

tance himself from these figures, a distinct "breed" with whom he had earlier sought to establish an affinity.

Vendler contends that the disjunction between the language of this final stanza and the rest of the ode is too jarring and inconsistent:

> The language of the close of *Urn* cannot be entirely assimilated to the language used earlier in the ode, and this is a flaw.
>
> (p. 145)

This would indeed be a flaw if we assume with Vendler that throughout the ode the speaker has remained relatively consistent. As we have seen, however, the speaker has undergone a sharp reversal of his initial perspective, a dramatic transformation that is aptly reflected in the diction of the final stanza.

It is crucial to note that the reader has followed, or indeed has *preceded*, the speaker to this state of transformation. While in the third stanza the speaker is still insistent upon the happiness depicted on the urn, already the reader has split away from this insistence. According to Kent, the rhetorical strategies of the poem "all join to subvert the ostensible assertions the language contains" (p. 25). We are slightly out of phase with the speaker, pushed slightly ahead and given a vision of where he will be before he gets there. This ode then, is not a report upon a transformation that we witness, it is a delicately structured arena in which we partake in the rite of transformation.

According to Kroeber, what distinguishes a "vision" from a "dream" is the kinds of participation and response that are encouraged and aroused from an Other.[10] If this Other is simply told about dream material, as in most Western art, then the Other is placed in the position of an "audience" member or a witness to the poet's selfish dream. But in the Ojibwa "Deer Dancing Song," Kroeber tells us, the singer is a visionary to the degree that he

[10] See Kroeber, pp. 269, 275–76. In this distinction Kroeber rehearses Sperry's contention that Keats perennially confused dreams and visions, when Sperry writes: "The root of the problem really lies in the distinction . . . between dream and vision. The poem [in this case "The Fall of Hyperion"] turns upon Keats's desire, indeed his vital need, to discriminate between the two while at the same time preserving the grounds of a common unity" (Sperry, p. 334).

> does not simply recollect the original old man's story of a dream; he verbally recreates part of it, just as in earlier times other Indians acted out (danced) the dream. The song, thus, gives us a glimpse into how unique experience can become, and has become, cultural tradition. Beginning in private dream, part of a personal gift, the song becomes available to others. (p. 272)

This level of participation is not only enabled by the diction of the ode's second and third stanzas, it is solicited by the very kind of poem the ode is. Philip Fisher argues that the "Ode on a Grecian Urn" be included in what he calls "emergency art":

> Art appears on an emergency basis when a multiplication of crises intrudes hesitation everywhere in the process of production. Where continuity is lost there is an attention to the past, a production of the past that is conspicuous as a desperate act. . . . Within this emergency a central fact is the appearance of works of art about other works of art, poems like Keats's "Ode on a Grecian Urn," paintings about other paintings like Picasso's "Femmes d'Algiers." These works of art about other works of art in a unique way outwit the problematic situation while registering it most completely. If all art is a mirror held up to nature, such works are mirrors held up to mirrors, a falling through mirrors.[11]

Fisher makes clear the powerful and complex relations among the numerous aesthetic levels of the poem. The urn stands in relation to Keats as the urn's maker stands in relation to the piper, and as the reader stands in relation to Keats's poem about the urn. The effect is dizzying, reminiscent of a Boy Scout manual I once had on whose cover was pictured a happy, striding Boy Scout holding a copy of the manual, on which was pictured the same Scout holding the manual on which he was pictured . . . *ad infinitum*.

At each aesthetic level of the poem (ode, urn, piper, etc.) the ostensible object of art functions as both a work of art to be contemplated and a meta-commentary on the works above and below it. What Keats claims about the urn is at once applicable to his own poem, and what he claims about himself as he con-

[11] Philip Fisher, "A Museum with One Work Inside: Keats and the Finality of Art," *Keats-Shelley Journal* 33 (1984): 87.

templates the urn applies to the reader as well. Kent hints at this interchangeability ("Keats implicitly includes his own urn-like ode in his reflection on this issue" [p. 25]), and Fisher multiplies the correspondences in his fascinating account of what he calls "nested frames of time" (p. 97).[12] To my mind the effect of this interchangeability is to lift the experience of reading this poem out of any determined reference to any single, genetic experience of Keats before an urn. He looks into the urn, only to find himself and the urn reflected in a dizzying multiplicity. He turns away from the urn and sees himself reflected as the anticipated reader of his urn-like ode on which he himself is now figured. There is, alas, no place outside of the urn, though its depths recede outside of any viewer's sight and its outer edge recedes beyond any reader's experience. I see in the dynamics of these "nested frames" of reference an analogue with Kroeber's description of the Ojibwa song:

> the specific beginning of this Ojibwa traditional song is not exactly identified: it started with an anonymous "old man" sometime "long ago." The later singer participates in a tradition recreatively, rather than merely reciting a later "version" of some definitively placed original. The Indian tradition is not so purely genetic as our own; origination does not equate with primacy so neatly as in our art. (p. 272)

It seems to me that the energy of Keats's ode is designed to loosen the bands of this kind of genetic primacy, to draw us away from any specific origin of aesthetic experience, be that origin the urn, the ode, or Keats himself. Indeed, the ode encourages us to put it down, to stop reading it, as Keats in the ode finally turns away from the urn.

Thus the urn is a very peculiar "friend to man" (l. 48). It is not the kind of friend the speaker would like to emulate, despite his initial infatuation with its static nature. He calls it "friend" in the sense that Scrooge called the Ghost of Christmas-Yet-to-Come "friend": a friend who has shown by counterexample

[12] Fisher's concern here is with distinguishing among these levels of aesthetic experience as he delineates the "natural," "social," and "cultural" fields of experience represented in the ode. His argument, I believe, is different from, but not antithetical to, my own argument about the continuity among these levels.

what he would like to avoid. Contrary to what Vendler and other critics propose, the urn has not offered to the speaker a desirable alternative to the "fact of process"; rather, it has shown him that participation in the "fact of process," from which the speaker had initially sought refuge, is far more desirable than the static fixation on any urn-like work of art.

The intractable difficulty of attributing and interpreting the final lines of the ode might perhaps be an extension of the strategy that Keats employs in the third stanza of the poem, in which the confusion and excesses of the diction work to great effect. My reflex is to read the final lines of the ode ("Beauty is truth, truth beauty,—that is all / Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know" [ll. 49–50]) as not being spoken by the urn (contrary to what many readers assert) but by the speaker, who indirectly attributes them to the urn. They are what he concludes from his encounter with the urn, not what the urn tells him directly. Thus a crucial psychic distance has been interposed between the urn and the speaker, and a palpable irony fills the gap. "Beauty," says the speaker, "is the truth of process and transience, not the stasis of you, the urn." Vendler has compared the final chiasmatic aphorism to the alternating beams of a lighthouse (p. 133). In a very different sense, I believe the urn itself (and by extension the ode) is like a lighthouse, a beacon that from a distance calls one to shore, but the closer one gets, the more it serves as a warning to stay away lest you be run aground and shipwrecked.

The fact that these closing lines can be attributed variously—speaker to urn, speaker to reader, speaker to figures on the urn, urn itself to reader[13]—might well be a means by which the poem asserts the continuity of all the aesthetic levels enumerated by Fisher. These lines in their lexical and syntactic ambiguity speak *at once* to each distinct "nested frame of time." They exist both inside and outside of any single frame of reference, in the gap that separates and unites the reader, speaker, figures, and maker of the urn. It is with this simultaneity of lev-

[13] For a complete discussion of these alternative attributions, see Jack Stillinger, *The Hoodwinking of Madeline, and Other Essays on Keats's Poems* (Urbana and Chicago: Univ. of Illinois Press, 1971), pp. 167–73.

els of discourse that Keats assumes a sense of community, a sense that Sperry and Kroeber contend Keats never achieves.

In a 30 September 1820 letter to Charles Brown, Keats traces the essential shape that I see underlying the dramatic, transformative progress of the ode:

> I wish for death every day and night to deliver me from these pains, and then I wish death away, for death would destroy even those pains which are better than nothing. (*Letters*, II, 345)

The most distinguishing feature of the sine-wave shape that underwrites this ode is that the point of despair at the beginning from which the speaker seeks to flee is identical with the hope that he embraces at the ode's conclusion. He finally turns away from that which he initially thought might give him solace, and he reembraces the pain from which he sought a remedy. He thereby reveals a radical transformation in himself (a transformation that I have earlier suggested is anticipated and enacted by the reader).[14] The gesture is one of disintegration, a purging of the speaker's life before his encounter with the urn and a reintegration back into that life that he had initially rejected. The pattern, of course, is an ancient one, most fully articulated by Victor Turner in his conception of "liminal periods," during which individuals become members of a community by first purging themselves of all attributes of their former life and then reclaiming those same attributes. During their 'liminal' phase these individuals are of "a twofold character. They are at once no longer classified and not yet classified." During such liminal times, says Turner,

> It is interesting to note how, by the principle of the economy (or parsimony) of symbolic reference, logically antithetical processes of death and growth may be represented by the same tokens, for example, by huts and tunnels that are at once tombs and wombs, by lunar symbolism (for the same moon waxes and wanes), and by innumerable other symbolic formations and actions. This coincidence of opposite processes and notions in a single represen-

[14] It is curious that in *Metamorphosis in Keats* (New York: New York Univ. Press, 1980) Barry Gradman does not discuss the "Ode on a Grecian Urn," whose pattern of development is very much in line with his observations on Keats's other works.

> tation characterizes the peculiar unity of the liminal: that which is neither this nor that, and yet is both.[15]

It seems to me that the "Ode on a Grecian Urn" might exemplify these attributes of liminal periods, passage through which signals an achievement of community and, in Kroeber's terms, visionary status. I see in the identity of the beginning and end points of the ode (the first and fifth points on the sine-wave) the single representation of opposite processes. And in the fourth stanza I see the liminal status of the speaker dramatized, as he is "no longer classified and not yet classified," speaking with the voice of the inanimate, looking for consolation from the stone-silent folk.

To the extent that each reader re-creates, rather than witnesses, the pivotal transformation of the speaker, feels the ode's final, pulsar-like lines burning through the nested frames of reference that join figures to speaker, speaker to reader, and urn to ode, to that extent the "Ode on a Grecian Urn" stands apart from Kroeber's indictment of Western art. The ode rises to visionary status and transmits energy from poet to reader, a feat that both Kroeber and Sperry suggest Keats longed for but never achieved.

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[15] Victor W. Turner, "Betwixt and Between: The Liminal Period in *Rites de Passage*," in *Reader in Comparative Religion: An Anthropological Approach*, ed. William A. Lessa and Evon Z. Vogt, 4th ed. (New York: Harper and Rowe, 1979), pp. 235–36, 237.

Lyric Displacement in the Victorian Monologue: Naturalizing the Vocative

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Jonathan Culler has shown how the lyric convention of apostrophizing nonhuman objects has come to seem increasingly archaic to both nineteenth-century and modern poets.[1] Though a venerable lyric tradition of addressing the breeze, the dawn, or the nightingale affirms and celebrates the poet's words of power, only inmates of mental hospitals would actually talk to birds, trees, and doors—much less to holes in a wall, as Pound's speaker does in "Marvoil." We resist the poets' claims, and we feel embarrassed when they think they can change the natural world by doing magical things with words.

The single most important explanation of how the Victorian monologue[2] dramatically displaces rapturous lyric apos-

[1] See "Apostrophe" in his *The Pursuit of Signs: Semiotics, Literature, Deconstruction* (Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press, 1981), pp. 135–54.

[2] Each influential critic of the Victorian and modern monologue has brought into focus some distinctive new feature of the genre. In his pioneer study Robert Langbaum posits a disequilibrium between the sympathy a monologue elicits for its speaker and the moral judgment that it manages to hold in abeyance—or at least to neutralize as our least appropriate response (see *The Poetry of Experience: The Dramatic Monologue in Modern Literary Tradition* [New York: Norton, 1957], esp. p. 85). Whereas M. H. Abrams contends that the speaker's conscious meanings in a monologue are less important than the unconscious meanings he conceals or evades, Eric Griffiths believes that a monologue explores the conflicts of a self-divided mind and that these conflicts can be explored most subtly and inclusively in a silent reading of the poem (see Abrams, *A Glossary of Literary Terms*, 5th ed. [Chicago: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1985], pp. 45–46

trophes to nature-spirits and demons appears in John Keble's review of Lockhart's *Life of Scott*, which argues that all dramatic and epic genres are displacements of a poet's lyric impulse.[3] Thus Virgil's epic the *Aeneid* is said to disguise a pastoral yearning, indulged most directly in the *Georgics*. If a poet is writing a lyric, that poet is writing under little restraint to "any sudden burst of high or plaintive feeling" he may choose to indulge (Keble, "Review," p. 440). Such is not the case, however, with classical epic, where a persona's mask is "interposed, as a kind of transparent veil, between the listener and the narrator's real

and Griffiths, *The Printed Voice of Victorian Poetry* [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989], pp. 71–75). For Isobel Armstrong the monologue is a genre in which a female counter-tradition in Victorian poetics can successfully oppose the aggressive male projections of an impersonator like Browning, who tends to objectify women (see *Victorian Poetry: Poetry, Poetics, and Politics* [London: Routledge, 1993], p. 320). T. S. Eliot interprets the genre more rhetorically: in a monologue he hears neither the first voice of the lyric poet nor the third voice of the playwright but the second or rhetorical voice of the poet speaking to an audience through a mask (see "The Three Voices of Poetry," in his *On Poetry and Poets* [New York: Farrar, Straus and Cudahy, 1957], p. 96). Interpreting the genre more ironically, Adena Rosmarin maintains that in a dramatic monologue the speaker's meaning can always be distinguished from the poem's meaning (see *The Power of Genre* [Minneapolis: Univ. of Minnesota Press, 1985], p. 40). Alan Sinfield discerns a slightly different irony: the monologue, he claims, tilts seductively in the direction of lyric poetry because it uses the first-person pronoun (see *Dramatic Monologue* [London: Methuen, 1977], p. 25). This lyric tilt turns out to be a mere "feint," however (Sinfield, p. 25), because unlike a lyric poem the monologue adopts a third-person or dramatic view of its world, as Ralph W. Rader has also convincingly argued (see "The Dramatic Monologue and Related Lyric Forms," *Critical Inquiry* 3 [1976]: 131–51). If pressed to offer a one-sentence definition of the genre, I should be tempted to say that a dramatic monologue is a poem of one-sided conversation in which the swerve of lyric apostrophe away from rhetoric often deflects the speaker from his ostensible purpose of persuading or manipulating a silent auditor. As an important example of what Isobel Armstrong calls the "double poem," the monologue both subverts and reconstructs its culture by its Socratic testing of convention and its humane appeal from morality or custom to a sense of how life might be lived more ethically. Like the short story or the novel, the dramatic monologue is an immensely protean genre that at different times exhibits all of the features I have just touched on. Because unconscious motives are stronger than conscious ones, speakers in monologues also tend to exhibit bad faith or unconscious deception rather than outright lies that they are conscious of perpetrating. When we sense the presence of T. S. Eliot's poet addressing an audience through a mask, we can usually identify a norm that allows us to measure any deviations from that norm with scientific accuracy. Such is not the case, however, in other, less magisterial, more aporetic monologues, where double irony replaces single irony and where even the poet may not know the answers to the questions he has asked.

3. John Keble, "Review of Lockhart's *Memoirs of the Life of Sir Walter Scott*," *British Critic and Quarterly Theological Review* 24 (1838): 423–83.

drift and feelings" ("Review," p. 436). Keble's observation applies with equal force to a monologue like Tennyson's "Demeter and Persephone," where the great Earth-mother's indictment of Zeus for the loss of her daughter acts as "a safety-valve to [the] full mind" ("Review," p. 440) of the grieving Tennyson, whose younger son, Lionel, had just died on his return voyage from India. Like the narrative structure of a prose romance by Sir Walter Scott or an epic action by Virgil, the classical monologue uses its mask to veil a deep confessional impulse.

Keble invites a critic to study the effects of the poet's dramatic displacements not only in the poet's naturalizing of the vocatives of direct address but also in his experiments with meter. In colloquial asides to a silent or an absent auditor, as in Coleridge's conversation poems, the speaker in a monologue often substitutes the irregular meters and casual idioms of "talking poetry" for those exalted and formal apostrophes to the breeze, the ambrosial air, or other surrogates of the Holy Spirit that manage to keep nineteenth-century nature poetry so remarkably well ventilated.

Coleridge's conversation poems naturalize the ode and lyric by substituting, for formal apostrophes to seasons, places, and natural phenomena, the dramatic monologue's vocatives of direct address to a person. In "This Lime-Tree Bower My Prison" (1797) Coleridge vacillates between both uses of the vocative: between address to his absent friend, Charles Lamb, and apostrophes to the sun, clouds, and ocean:

but thou, methinks, most glad,
My gentle-hearted Charles! for thou hast pined
And hungered after Nature, many a year,
In the great City pent,
Ah! slowly sink
Behind the western ridge, thou glorious sun!
Shine in the slant beams of the sinking orb,
Ye purple heath-flowers! richlier burn, ye clouds!

Live in the yellow light, ye distant groves!
And kindle, thou blue ocean![1]

Though there are two auditors, the apostrophes to the nonhuman auditors are subordinated to the poet's address to his friend, for whose benefit these natural phenomena—no longer inanimate objects now, but actors—are invited to perform.

To apostrophize the natural objects as "thou . . . sun . . . Ye purple heath-flowers," "ye clouds," "ye groves," and "thou blue ocean" is to bring them to life as *dramatis personae* in the theater of the poet's mind. Coleridge commands the "glorious sun" to sink in majesty, the purple flowers to shine, the clouds to burn, the grove to live in light, and even the ocean to kindle so that his absent friend, Charles, a city dweller and a stranger to such mysteries, may be "Struck with deep joy" and "stand," as Coleridge has stood, "Silent with swimming sense" (ll. 38–39). As a lord and sovereign over outward sense, the magician who apostrophizes these objects and commands them to act is already celebrating his power as a master of the revels, a kind of Lake District Prospero.

In "The Eolian Harp" (1795) Coleridge's hushed world of cottage, beanfield, and "distant sea" (p. 28, l. 11) commemorates what Browning would call "a good moment," a triumph of apostrophic time over simple narrative. Nothing external actually happens in the poem, because the speaker's vocative of direct address to Sara and his meditation on the harp internalize the action, changing every event into a drama in his own mind. The music made by the desultory breeze as it caresses the harp is valued only for the music it awakens in the apostrophizing subject. If the harp evokes the music of a world-soul, it is only with reference to the speaker's use of synaesthesia and apostrophe—"O the one life within us and abroad" (l. 26)—which produce marveling impressions of the "Rhythm in all thought" (l. 29) and the reversing chiastic flow of "light in sound, a sound-like power in light" (l. 28).

[1] Coleridge, "This Lime-Tree Bower My Prison," in *Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, ed. H. J. Jackson (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1985), p. 39, ll. 27–37. All further references to Coleridge's poetry are to this edition.

Even when the speaker registers the gesture of "mild reproof" (l. 49) from his silent auditor, he mutes and controls it by using a negative verbal construction—"not reject"—and a negative form of the adjective, "unhallowed": "*not* such thoughts / Dim and unhallowed dost thou *not reject*" (ll. 50–51, emphasis added). Both the vocatives of direct address to Sara and the apostrophes to the world-soul, "the one life within us and abroad," alert us to the transforming power, not so much of Sara or the world-soul as of the poetic voice itself. In such a conversation poem we find a prototype of all dramatic monologues, in which the silent auditor and the world addressed are present only to provoke activity in the speaker and to delegate their potential power to *him*.

In "Frost at Midnight" (1798) the silence and incomprehension of the speaker's auditor, the sleeping infant who is twice addressed as "babe," allow Coleridge to exercise prophetic authority without any fear of being reproved or checked by a critical listener like Sara. The speaker's vocatives of direct address to his son bring together two forms of discourse: the poet's private language and the "eternal language" of God, who uses a form of divine chiasmus to "teach / Himself in all, and all things in himself" (p. 88, ll. 60–62). "So shalt thou see and hear," Coleridge prophesies, in a beautiful use of the auxiliary verb of exhortation and decree,

> The lovely shapes and sounds intelligible
> Of that eternal language, which thy God
> Utters, who from eternity doth teach
> Himself in all, and all things in himself.
> Great universal Teacher! he shall mould
> Thy spirit, and by giving make it ask.
>
> ("Frost at Midnight," ll. 58–64)

Celebrating the future education of the child as a potential presence, Coleridge preempts the place of the "thou" and his "secret ministry of frost" (l. 72), which have been valued tutors of his own heart, by dramatizing his role as the Teacher's prophet.

Coleridge's conversation poem "The Nightingale" (1798) uses a double vocative: an apostrophe to the bird and an ad-

dress to two human auditors, the poet's sister and his friend. The most conversational feature of the poem is the speaker's self-critical reinvention of his meaning. No sooner has Coleridge quoted Milton's memorable description of the nightingale as "'most musical, most melancholy'" (l. 13) than he takes issue with it:

> A melancholy bird? Oh! idle thought!
> In nature there is nothing melancholy.
> ("The Nightingale," ll. 14–15)

Since he disagrees with Milton, why does Coleridge not revise his first thoughts by removing the two adjectives he places in quotation marks?

I think Coleridge prefers to let his original impressions stand in order to dramatize the difference between a mere description of a bird and the drama of a mind trying to chart the exact truth about its subject. Properly appreciated, the nightingale "Should make all Nature lovelier, and itself / Be loved like Nature!" (ll. 33–34). Only by degrees does Coleridge stumble on the truth that in the nightingale's strains a listener hears only the music he has already composed in his heart. Paradoxically, even in seeming to establish powerful relations between the speaker and the nightingale, the apostrophes to the bird—"Farewell, O Warbler!", "Once more, farewell, / Sweet Nightingale!" (ll. 89, 109–10)—turn description into event by locating the bird in a region of Coleridge's mind. By internalizing birds and people that seem at first to be external, the vocatives and apostrophes of direct address substitute the unpredictable and always changing force of an *event* for the stable and unchanging accuracy of an objective *description*.

> Well!—
> It is a father's tale: But if that Heaven
> Should give me life, his childhood shall grow up
> Familiar with these songs, that with the night
> He may associate joy.—Once more, farewell,
> Sweet Nightingale! once more, my friends! farewell.
> ("The Nightingale," ll. 105–10)

As the drama in progress spills across the boundaries of the monologue's formal farewells, Coleridge finds that it can be kept alive only in the memory of Coleridge's son and in the minds of future generations of friends and readers.

The vocative is the defining trope of the Victorian monologue, which naturalizes the apostrophes of Coleridge's conversation poems by transforming them into a speaker's seduction of a silent listener. But behind the vocative we can still hear the apostrophes of lyric poetry, and the more audible these apostrophes become, the more aware we also are of the ventriloquist who speaks through his puppets. By functioning as a trope of deflection that "complicate[s] or disrupt[s] the circuit of communication" (Culler, p. 135), apostrophes and vocatives raise important questions about who is being addressed in a monologue and about who is being heard. The dead musician whom the speaker apostrophizes in Robert Browning's "A Toccata of Galuppi's" (1855) is not a living person but a ghost, a spectral presence. And that monologue's apostrophes also make us aware of another ghost: the ghost of the poet, who is the phantom behind the mask.

A talking-song is to a soliloquy what "acting out" is to acting or what lyric fantasy is to dramatic discovery. We "overhear" the make-believe of a lyrical "talking-song," but we "hear" the self-consciously plotted argument of a dramatic "soliloquy." Whenever we eavesdrop on a speaker, we are likely to tune in on his lyric vagrancies and trespass on his privacy. Even as speakers in dramatic monologues turn toward empirical listeners, they may also turn away from them by addressing dead musicians, imagined tombs, or the portraits of ghosts. Dramatic "vocatives" that are addressed to present auditors are replaced by lyric "apostrophes" to phantoms, natural objects, works of art, or other, less perceptible entities.

Quintilian advises an orator not to address a judge directly but to apostrophize some other power or presence.[5] In gesturing toward the portrait of his last duchess, Browning's Duke is deflecting attention from his auditor. His marveling aside is the mark of his monologue's lyric impulse as it displaces the Duke's

[5] See *The Institutio Oratoria of Quintilian*, trans. H. E. Butler, 4 vols. (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1953), IV, Book IV, sec. 1, l. 63.

ostensible rhetorical motive: his attempt to gain a dowry by favorably impressing the envoy and the Count. Dramatic monologues might be defined as poems in which lyric absorption in inanimate objects like the Bishop of St. Praxed's tomb or Frà Pandolf's portrait of the Duke of Ferrara's wife continually deflect a speaker's ostensible attempt to seduce an auditor verbally.[6] The speaker's undoing comes from the power of his lyric reveries to turn aside and complicate his rhetorical appeals to an auditor.

Apostrophe evokes not so much a powerful response or feeling to the object addressed as an intense feeling for the act of apostrophizing itself. The function of apostrophe is to bend to the speaker's will the inanimate or dead objects that the speaker addresses. As Culler says, "to apostrophize is to will a state of affairs, to attempt to call it into being" (p. 139). Since it also assumes a world of sentient forces or unseen powers potentially responsive to human desires, apostrophe always posits the power of a dramatic monologue to turn description into event and to make something unforeseen happen.

To naturalize a lyric convention that poets find obsolete and archaic, the dramatic monologue substitutes a human auditor for a nonhuman one. Instead of talking to the dawn, Tithonus addresses a beautiful woman, the goddess who becomes the silent auditor of his dramatic monologue. Birds, trees, and doors cannot talk back to the lyric poet who apostrophizes them. And neither can the auditor in a monologue. In both cases, the one-sided address is also a form of "doing-by-saying," an exercise of the speaker's performative power in an attempt to influence the person who is apostrophized or addressed.[7]

[6] For a more detailed study of this rhetorical theory of the monologue, see my chapter "Browning's Unheard Words: The Poetry of Silence," in my *Victorians and Mystery: Crises of Representation* (Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press, 1990), esp. p. 208.

[7] On the distinction between performative and descriptive utterance, see J. L. Austin, *How to Do Things with Words* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1962), p. 5. "Doing by saying" is a phrase I borrow from Geoffrey Hill, *The Lords of Limit: Essays on Literature and Ideas* (London: André Deutsch, 1984), p. 119.

There is a close connection between the use of vocatives in elegies and in monologues. We cannot literally apostrophize dead musicians, but because one condition of reading Browning's elegiac monologue "A Toccata of Galupppi's" is to do just that, it is already too late to retract the rhetorical trope of addressing the dead once we register the fallacy it entails. An error is exposed and repudiated, repeated and perpetuated, at one and the same time. Like ghostly conjuring, personified apostrophe exposes its artifice at the very moment it invites acceptance as a species of what Coleridge calls "poetic faith."

One discursive germ of the monologue is a speaker's one-sided address to a silent auditor, which represents a humanized form of the standard lyric apostrophe. Another possible origin of the dramatic monologue as a genre is the free indirect discourse—"le style indirect libre"—of the social novelist. Without abandoning the pretense that the implied author or narrator is still speaking, free indirect discourse reproduces the inmost thoughts of a dramatic character. The swift changes in point of view, alternating between the narrator's commentary and the thoughts of the impersonated character, may be hard to plot in a novel. Yet instances abound in *Middlemarch* (1871–72), as David Lodge has shown, and we can find several examples in Trollope's fiction.[5] Though the device exists in the novels of Austen, and thus antedates not just George Eliot and Trollope but the Victorian monologue itself, free indirect discourse plays an increasingly dominant role in Victorian prose fiction, whose narrators are often among the most complex characters in the novels.

Though traces of the implied author may all but disappear in a dramatic monologue, they are still discernible in the monologue's epigraphs, in the slippage of its masks, or occasionally (as in the postscript to "Bishop Blougram's Apology" [1855])

[5] David Lodge, in "*Middlemarch* and the Idea of the Classic Realist Text," in his *After Bakhtin: Essays on Fiction and Criticism* (New York: Routledge, 1990), writes: "If we are looking for a single formal feature which characterizes the realist novel of the nineteenth century, it is surely not the domination of the characters' discourses by the narrator's discourse (something in fact more characteristic of earlier narrative literature) but the extensive use of free indirect speech, which obscures and complicates the distinction between the two types of discourse" (p. 49).

in the intrusive commentary of the implied author. The origin of the monologue in free indirect discourse explains the genre's status as ventriloquized lyric. In principle, the monologue is not "monological" at all, in Bakhtin's sense. Its form is "dialogical," a supple and agile interplay between impersonated characters and the poet who impersonates them.

To apostrophize a ghost is also to animate it. To withhold existence from a power we address is to contradict an apostrophe's first axiom of faith. If we successfully invoke and petition God, He may not only speak to us but also acknowledge our demands. Each answer to a prayer is implicit in its address: the Anglo-Saxon "biddan," like the German "ersuchen," is a verb of both entreaty and demand. When Childe Roland boldly summons up the dead comrades of his youth, he cannot in his next breath banish them to oblivion. Nor can Master Hugues apostrophize phantoms only to deny that they exist.

The strongest figure that a voice can project is what Culler calls "the pure *O* of undifferentiated voicing," the *O* of apostrophe or invocation. This is particularly potent in Browning's "One Word More" (1855), where the "O"s of apostrophe refer "to other apostrophes and thus," as Culler notes, "to the lineage and conventions of sublime poetry" (pp. 142–43).

> Oh, the crowd must have emphatic warrant!
> Theirs, the Sinai-forehead's cloven brilliance,
> Right-arm's rod-sweep, tongue's imperial fiat.
> Never dares the man put off the prophet.
>
> Oh, their Rafael of the dear Madonnas,
> Oh, their Dante of the dread Inferno,[1]

Whereas some dramatic action has to be developed in a stage play, nothing need happen in a dramatic monologue, because the monologue's apostrophe to a ghost or its invocation to a living person is itself the happening. What is dead can be conjured from the grave and what is living can be interred

[1] Browning, "One Word More," in *The Complete Works of Robert Browning*, ed. Roma A. King Jr. et al., 13 vols. (Waco, Tx.: Baylor Univ.; and Athens: Ohio Univ. Press, 1969–96), IV, 145, 150. All further references to Browning's poems are to this edition.

Dead historical characters can be brought to life and their auditors entombed in silence. Even when the speaker in "A Toccata of Galuppi's" feels "chilly and grown old" (*Works*, V, 199, l. 45), he also triumphs over time by showing how apostrophe can be used to turn the temporal transition from eighteenth-century Venice to Victorian England into a reversible movement from the age of Darwin back to the eighteenth century. Browning contrasts the one-directional movement of narrative, where time has an arrow, with the reversible, two-way flow of a monologue's apostrophes.

When Browning's amateur scientist invokes the ghost of the dead musician, Baldassare Galuppi, he locates it in the time of the apostrophe. The time of the vocative is always a special time, the "now" of an event rather than a mere descriptive moment that traces the path of a sequential narrative or story. Everything that is invoked in a monologue becomes an element of the event that the monologue is aspiring to become.

Monologues are often praised for their dramatic immediacy. But as a genre that celebrates the vocative of direct address, the monologue commemorates a fictional time in which nothing dramatic or lyrically intense need actually occur. To evoke a ghost as a living presence is to apostrophize it. Though every ghost is a casualty of time, the apostrophe to a historical ghost also places it beyond time. Such is the double feat of the dramatic monologue, whose ghostly conjurings and apostrophic commands deny temporality in the very act of using tropes that acknowledge time's power.[10]

Monologues like "A Toccata of Galuppi's" exploit what Culler calls the "sinister reciprocity" of poems that "capture the time of the apostrophic *now* and thrust it provocatively at the reader" (p. 153). Not only does Galuppi's music prefigure the

[10] A closely related paradox is the power of ghostly invocations to freeze the living as well as to animate the dead. According to Paul de Man, "the latent threat that inhabits prosopopeia" is that "by making the [dead] speak, the symmetrical structure of the trope implies, by the same token, that the living are struck dumb, frozen in their own death" ("Autobiography as De-facement," *Modern Language Notes*, 94 [1979], 928).

speaker's own mortality, it also commemorates the moment of his own entry into the dismal fellowship of the dead. A temporal presence and absence have been replaced by an apostrophic presence and absence, as in Keats's harrowing lyric "This Living Hand" (written in 1819).

Ghosts feed on our blood—not on the blood of our empirical lives, which we are willing to sacrifice, but on the blood of our imaginative lives, which we are unwilling to lose:

> Oh Galuppi, Baldassaro, this is very sad to find!
> I can hardly misconceive you; it would prove me deaf
> and blind;
>
> ("A Toccata of Galuppi's," ll. 1–2)

The apostrophe to "Galuppi, Baldassaro" is both an interrogation and an arraignment. The dead musician is put on trial even as the substitution of apostrophic for narrative time confers life on the dead and a deathlike chill on the living: "In you come with your cold music till I creep thro' every nerve" (l. 33). The sustained vocatives suspend the force of the dreadful stresses reinforced by long vowels, which toll incessantly like a knell: "Death stepped tacitly and took them where they never see the sun" (l. 30). For just as tacit as the fellowship of the dead is the death-revoking power of the apostrophes, which allow the musician and the scenes he evokes to stand before him as living presences.

Apostrophic address is kept in the foreground by the repeated use of the vocative, "you," and by puzzled interrogations: "do you say?" and "what?" Just as free of historical and narrative time as the dead musician is the Rialto bridge, which seems frozen into a timeless present like a snapshot or the "still" in a movie:

> 'tis arched by . . . what you call
> Shylock's bridge with houses on it, where they
> kept the carnival:
>
> ("A Toccata of Galuppi's," ll. 7–8)

Unconnected to the preceding and ensuing lines, the substitution of a description for a name situates the bridge in an apostrophic *now*. It sits in its own frame, captured by the shutter of

the speaker's mind, which releases it for an instant from the flood of history.

Apostrophe may exhibit the paradoxical power ascribed by Harold Bloom to metalepsis, the trope that by reversing the relation of before to after and of cause to effect allows the dead to live and the living to feel spectral.[11] If the speaker's apostrophe to Galuppi is a mere arraignment, then it is the evasion of a censor who tries to repress his own fear of death by half-scoffing at Galupppi's nihilism. But the Englishman's apostrophes to Galuppi are also a metalepsis that produces the illusion of having fathered his own father, for Galuppi is the speaker's Venetian precursor, an artist of erotic nostalgia. And by resurrecting him from the grave of eighteenth-century Venice, the son's apostrophes to his spiritual and aesthetic father confer a kind of posthumous immortality on the composer, whose own best music has a chilling, nerve-dissolving quality: "In you come with your cold music till I creep thro' every nerve" (l. 33). For this reason, to appropriate the elegiac genius of Galuppi is also to reject what metalepsis in principle makes possible: the reversal of time's arrow. Or, as Bloom says, "nothing has happened because nothing has changed, and the final grimness of Browning's eerie poem is that its speaker is caught in a repetition. He will pause awhile, and then play a toccata of Galuppi's again" (p. 186), as a way of prolonging his own strange obsession with belatedness, with his sense of feeling "chilly and grown old" (l. 45).

Every time Browning wants to replace a temporal *description* with an apostrophic *event* in his monologue "One Word More," he uses an apostrophe signaled by "Oh" or a vocative like "You and I," which reminds us that the whole poem is framed as an address to his wife, Elizabeth. The concluding apostrophes to Rafael and Dante yield in the final line to another direct address: "borne, see, on my bosom!" The one song that Rafael composed is sung in Browning's brain, and the one angel that Dante drew is etched on his breast. But instead of merely announcing this miracle, Browning uses the apostrophic *now* of

[11] See Harold Bloom, *Poetry and Repression: Revisionism from Blake to Stevens* (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1976): "Metalepsis or transumption thus becomes a total, final act of taking up a poetic stance in relation to anteriority, particularly to the anteriority of poetic language, which means primarily the loved-and-feared poems of the precursors" (p. 20).

the vocative to thrust his angel-etched bosom provocatively at his two auditors and observers, at both Elizabeth and the reader:

> Oh, their Rafael of the dear Madonnas,
> Oh, their Dante of the dread Inferno,
> Wrote one song—and in my brain I sing it,
> Drew one angel—borne, see, on my bosom!
> ("One Word More," *Works*, VI: 150, ll. 198–201)

A reader cannot literally hear Rafael's unsung melody, because Browning performs the song silently in the music hall of his brain. But in a daring attempt to cross the boundaries of space and time, Browning invites us to behold Dante's angel: Look, I'm baring my chest for you: don't you see the figure etched here?

The last line asserts what is clearly false; we might be expected to smile at its transparent fiction, for on Browning's exposed male chest we can surely see nothing, not even a tattoo. But when we read the monologue sympathetically, we probably see exactly what Browning predicts we shall see. If we "bless" ourselves "with silence," as Browning does, then we create the kind of space in which ghosts can be conjured and the dead come back to life. Overcoming absence and death by an act of ghostly conjuring, we fulfill Browning's prediction: See, I hold out my chest to you. Look at Dante's angel. Though Browning knows the pictured angel is only a fiction, he uses the vocative "see" and the two apostrophes to enforce this fiction as an event. In embracing a wholly apostrophic time, in which doing is also a form of saying, we can temporarily suspend our disbelief that Browning is actually present and that the angel pictured on his chest is forever thrust out for us to see. As Culler says of Keats's poem "This Living Hand," Browning here "predicts this mystification, dares us to resist it, and shows that its power is irresistible" (Culler, p. 154).

Praised by G. K. Chesterton as "one of the most perfect lyrics in the English language,"[12] Browning's elegiac monologue "May and Death" (1864) assumes the form of a one-sided conversation with a young man called "Charles," a pseudonym for Browning's childhood friend and cousin, James Silverthorne. The address to Charles is necessarily one-sided, and its voca-

[12] *Robert Browning* (London: Macmillan, 1903), p. 21.

tives of direct address indulge a longing for pathetic fallacy. If nature had mourned more wholeheartedly for Browning's dead friend—as it mourned for Milton's Lycidas—then three-quarters of its spring flowers would have died with Charles. Browning believes the fourth part should have died, too:

> I wish that when you died last May,
>   Charles, there had died along with you
> Three parts of spring's delightful things;
>   Ay, and, for me, the fourth part too.
>   ("May and Death," *Works*, VI, 273, ll. 1–4)

Since the death of Browning's young friend ought to have been accompanied by an absence of rhyming or consonance in nature, the survival of half of a ballad's conventional *abab* rhyme scheme in each tetrameter quatrain aptly marks a partial failure in sympathy. The rhyme of "you" and "too" traces a vestige of order in a world of loss and pain, where all symmetry or harmony seems temporarily suspended.

But in the second quatrain this fancy strikes the elegist as foolish. There is no reason why the consonance that still survives for other like-minded friends should not be celebrated in such formal pairings as "arm in arm", the linking of "arm" and "warm," which creates a rhyme for the eye only, and the fully audible chiming of "friends" and "ends":

> A foolish thought, and worse, perhaps!
>   There must be many a pair of friends
> Who, arm in arm, deserve the warm
>   Moon-births and the long evening-ends.
>   ("May and Death," ll. 5–8)

Though the termination of the day may coincide with the termination of a line and quatrain, its closure is muted by the harmony of the rhyme words, which are themselves "a pair of friends."

Just when the opening apostrophe to Charles is fading from memory, it is revived in stanza three by four urgent optatives, each addressed to absent friends:

> So, for their sake, be May still May!
>   Let their new time, as mine of old,
> Do all it did for me:
>   ("May and Death," ll. 9–11)

The vagrant "wish" of the first quatrain is now replaced by an imperious decree, whose fiat is made to sound imperial by crossing a line-break

I bid
Sweet sights and sounds throng manifold.'
("May and Death," ll. 11–12)

By conjuring into being marvels of sight and sound on behalf of all absent friends, the elegist allows even the dead Charles to rise from the grave in a bold metalepsis that eases the wound of the mourner's own belatedness. Unobtrusively, the monologue's apostrophe to Charles and its subdued optatives reverse relations of before and after. Such tropes create the illusion of the dead youth's return to his former spring haunts by ritualistically and momentarily banishing three-quarters of the May flowers, then graciously revoking the decree by restoring all of them to life.

The most spacious syntactic units come at the end of the monologue, where two full quatrains are used to voice the mourner's culminating wish: his modest request that a certain spring plant with a red streak on its leaves might languish or even die this year. The plant is invoked in a full quatrain, then turned in the last stanza into the grammatical object of a short half-line petition, "That, they might spare"

Only, one little sight, one plant,
Woods have in May, that starts up green
Save a sole streak which, so to speak,
Is spring's blood, spilt its leaves between,—

That, they might spare; a certain wood
Might miss the plant; their loss were small:
But I,—whene'er the leaf grows there,
Its drop comes from my heart, that's all.
("May and Death," ll. 13–20)

Just when the sundering of the elegist from his auditor is most complete, and the idea of sundering is even mirrored by the tmesis that separates the participle "spilt" from the preposition "between" that modifies it ("Is spring's blood, spilt its leaves between"), the distancing is spanned by the gracious run-on that

crosses the space between quatrains. Even the distance between rhyme words begins to contract, as the internal rhyming of "whene'er" and "there" (l. 19) echoes for the first time the word buried in the middle of the stanza's opening line, the pivotal verb "spare" (l. 17). The diminishing diction in phrases like "their loss were small" and "that's all," which is the most contracted statement in the lyric, cannot disguise the minor marvel of the Ovidian metamorphosis that turns the drop of blood from the mourner's heart into the missing red streak on the leaf.

By personifying the dawn as Aurora, the return of spring as the reunion of Demeter and Persephone, and the beautiful valley of Ida as Oenone's mother, Tennyson in "Oenone" (1832) uses classical mythology to turn the apostrophe of an ode or lyric into a dramatic monologue's more naturalized version of the same trope: the vocative of direct address to an auditor. No sooner has Oenone described the beautiful valley in Ida as "lovelier / Than all the valleys of Ionian hills" than she places it beyond space and time by apostrophizing it as her mother:

> "O mother Ida, many-fountained Ida,
> Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die."[13]

Similarly, in "Tithonus" (1860), by invoking the dawn as a transcendent presence, as the luminous goddess Aurora, the speaker confers an illusion of permanence on the tremulous twilight scene of "Far-folded mists" retreating like images seen from facing mirrors down "ever-silent spaces of the East" and "gleaming halls of morn":

> I asked thee, "Give me immortality."
> Then didst thou grant mine asking with a smile
> ("Tithonus," *Poems*, II, 608, ll. 9–10, 15–16)

Classical mythology's capacity to turn the apostrophes of an ode or lyric into the vocatives of a dramatic monologue may partially explain why Tennyson's greatest monologues are mythical in their origin.

[13] Tennyson, "Oenone," in *The Poems of Tennyson in Three Volumes*, ed. Christopher Ricks (Berkeley and Los Angeles: Univ. of California Press, 1987), I, 419, ll. 1–2, 22–23. All further references to Tennyson's poems are to this edition.

As soon as the dark house, the doors, the yew tree, or the burial ship in *In Memoriam* (1850) are apostrophized as ghostly powers or demons, the mourner can also affirm that the presences he addresses, however sinister or menacing, are also alive. Section 7 of the great elegy opens as inert description. But when we must rapidly reconstrue the first five lines as an apostrophe in order to make sense of the grammar in line 6, the petition to the "Dark house" to "behold" the mourner clearly acknowledges that the house on Wimpole Street is a phantomlike presence, a genius of place, perhaps even a region of the mourner's own mind.

> Dark house, by which once more I stand
>   Here in the long unlovely street,
>   Doors, where my heart was used to beat
> So quickly, waiting for a hand,
>
> A hand that can be clasped no more—
>   Behold me
>
> (*In Memoriam*, *Poems*, II: 325–26, 7.1–5)

The assumption of life enforced by the mourner's apostrophe to the house is not put at risk by any disclaimer that he may make about the darkness of "the long unlovely street" or about the desolation of doors that will never again open on his friend. The assertion of bleakness and despair oddly contradicts the mourner's faith in a living auditor, a faith that is implicit in his use of apostrophe and his petition of direct address to the personified house.

Equally potent is Arnaut's apostrophe to the hole in the wall in Pound's monologue "Marvoil" (1909). The descriptive narrative at the beginning of the monologue falls into predictable patterns of chiasmus and reversal: "I have small mind to sit / Day long, long day cooped on a stool."[11] But the monologue comes to life the moment it substitutes apostrophic time for narrative time:

> Wherefore, O hole in the wall here
> When the wind blows sigh thou for my sorrow

[11] Pound, "Marvoil," in *Persona: The Shorter Poems of Ezra Pound* (New York: New Directions, 1926), p. 22, ll. 2–3. All further references to the poem are to this edition.

> That I have not the Countess of Beziers
> Close in my arms here
> Even as thou shalt soon have this parchment
>
> ("Marvoil," ll. 40–44)

The apostrophe to a hole may provoke a titter or ironic smile. What could be more absurd than turning a wall into a *dramatis persona*, like the rustic actors in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, then apostrophizing a mere empty space in that wall? But in animating the wall's hole, which will survive as the troubadour's surrogate, "sighing his sorrow in the wind" (l. 46), the ritual address does more than evoke the speaker's love for the Countess of Beziers. In committing his praise of the lady to the wall's safekeeping, Arnaut's apostrophe also helps commemorate—and keep alive in the dwelling-place of memory—his posthumous identity as a bereaved lover and troubadour.

> Keep yet my secret in thy breast here,
> Even as I keep her image in my heart here
>
> ("Marvoil," ll. 47–48)

The symmetrical phrasing ("in thy breast here," "in my heart here") combines with the diffused personification to dramatize an empathic merging of persons.

Arnaut is celebrating the power of poetry and music to displace a temporal pattern of actual loss—the removal of the lover from his lady and their eventual separation after death—with a reversible alternation between absence and presence, loss and repossession. As long as the apostrophized hole keeps the lover's secret in its breast by embracing the parchment, the lover will be able to replace the one-directional movement of a temporal sequence with the reversible movement of apostrophic time. Nothing else need happen in a monologue that apostrophizes a wall, because by preserving the lady's image in his heart, the lover's apostrophe itself becomes the happening.

The paradigmatic narrative of all ghostly conjuring is Jesus's call to Lazarus—"Lazarus, come forth"—or

Orpheus's call to Eurydice. In "An Epistle of Karshish" (1855) and "Demeter and Persephone" the poet's conjuring of the Arab physician and the great Earth-Mother of pagan mythology mirrors the monologues' paradigmatic narratives of raising Lazarus and Persephone from the underworld. The stories of Lazarus, Persephone, and Eurydice are "mirror-texts" of the device of raising ghosts, which is what Tzvetan Todorov would call the "discursive" germ of the genre in which such tales of resurrection appear.[15] A fictive raising of the dead through invocation and personification introduces a story about raising the dead through similar devices.

What we may finally begin to hear in a monologue is the voice of a ghostly conjurer who is not merely the poet Browning or the Nazarene sage who conjures Lazarus from the underworld but a neuter voice behind the personal voice, what J. Hillis Miller calls "the 'it' behind any 'he' or 'she.'"[16] The justification of such self-canceling personification is the identity of the sage with God, "the very God! think, Abib; dost thou think?" ("Epistle of Karshish," *Works*, V, 229, l. 304). The personification of God as the sage who raises Lazarus from the dead reaches beyond personification to an affirmation of miraculous identity. The sage not only personifies God. He *is* God.

Like the historical or legendary ghosts they summon, monologues always exhibit fragmentation and disfigurement. Their acts of spectral summoning always presuppose the absence or death of what they resurrect. The talking eyes of the Bishop of St. Praxed's mistress, the lifelike smile of the Duchess of Ferrara, Gandolf's leer, the Spanish monk's drinking of watered orange pulp at three gulps to confute the Arians, are all detachable elements floating freely in the air like the grin of the Cheshire cat. Just as a mask substitutes a frozen face for a whole and mobile person, so a monologue often reduces real people to their skeletal parts. An act of spectral summoning projects an illusion of wholeness from a base of mutilation.

The art of the monologue also exposes the fictive status of its truth-claims in the very act of urging those claims as a condition of reading the poetry. Perhaps this paradox explains why

[15] See "The Origin of Genres," *New Literary History* 8 (1976): 162–164.
[16] *Versions of Pygmalion* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1990), p. 201.

the monologue's art of endowing the inanimate with life even while exposing the personification as a poetic fiction accords so well with the deconstructive genius of the Higher Criticism. To read a monologue the way David Friedrich Strauss reads the Bible is to accept a trope or an enabling fiction as a regulative truth. Monologues that resuscitate historical ghosts are history-like fictions: in Browning's canon they are a secular version of the gospels, which themselves live on the borderland between fiction and truth.

What most interests Browning's St. John about Christ are the things least attainable through historical criticism. And yet fictions about the Jesus of history are necessary in order to make the Christ of theology intelligible. The art of Browning's Christian apologists—St. John, Bishop Blougram, and the speaker in "Christmas-Eve"—is, if you will, a deconstructive art. For although these characters recognize that Jesus is not a figure of the past but of the present (a living being who speaks to us now), they also realize that to deconstruct the Gospels' history-like fictions is to rob those fictions of their regulative force, ending with "Fichte's clever cut at God himself" ("Bishop Blougram's Apology," *Works*, V, 320, l. 744). A Jesus who is too closely identified with someone we might want to be—a wise, compassionate, prophetic, charismatic figure—may be merely an idol, a flattering picture of his worshipers perhaps but not a portrait of God.

Resuscitation of a corpse is not to be confused with resurrection. A bodily resuscitation takes place in the external world. An authentic resurrection occurs within a believer: it is a performative rather than a descriptive act. As one scholar says, "whatever the resurrection involved, it was clearly not . . . a once-dead person coming back to life and resuming the conditions of ordinary existence until he or she dies again"; resurrection means "entry into another mode of being, not restoration to a previous mode of being."[17] The ghostly conjuring of a dramatic monologue resurrects a historical character: despite Browning's own metaphor, it does not merely resuscitate a corpse. To be resurrected is to enter into the consciousness of the one who resurrects. The poet of the monologues appropriates the historical character; the sensibility of each is altered as a result.

[17] Marcus J. Borg, *Jesus, a New Vision: Spirit, Culture, and the Life of Discipleship* (San Francisco: Harper, 1991), p. 185.

Though all monologues invoke and personify historical or legendary ghosts, the act of raising a ghost, like resurrecting a corpse, may be an act of black magic fraught with risk for both the conjurer and the ghost. The conjurer may be possessed by an evil spirit, as are Guido or the Duke of Ferrara, whose demons must be exorcised. Alternatively, the raised spirit may suffer the fate of Lazarus in Browning's monologue: in being raised from the dead, he may be spiritually razed or raped.

What turns out to be unreadable, however, is not the risky trope of invoking ghosts but the narrative from which such invocations have been banished, for invocation of a personified subject is, as J. Hillis Miller says, "the inaugural trope of narration" (p. 221). Though the historical and legendary ghosts that the genre resuscitates are fictions of personification and illusions of presence created by vocatives of direct address to absent, dead, or silent auditors, it is equally true to say that without a willing suspension of our disbelief in such fictions we should never have the wit to read a monologue nor the imagination to reconstruct it. Even as we surrender to the spell of the genre's summoning forth of historical and legendary ghosts, we simultaneously acknowledge our surrender to that spell for the mystification that it is: a bewitchment of our minds by means of words.

In recuperating an archaic convention of lyric apostrophe by humanizing the object addressed, the Victorian dramatic monologue illustrates John Keble's theory of the mechanisms by which genres are disturbed, displaced, and transformed. The naturalization of lyric apostrophe is part of a Victorian attempt to provide a local habitation and a name for the Romantic poet's communion with nature-spirits and ghosts. The address of Browning's personae to human auditors instead of to west winds or birds is also in keeping with attempts in Victorian theology to venerate some eternal greatness incarnate in the passage of historical and temporal fact, especially in the anthropological theology of George Eliot, for whom the second great commandment, love of one's neighbor, all but supplants the first commandment, love of God. Idealist attempts to deify

all humanity come to focus in the anecdote that Alan Sell recounts about Sir Henry Jones, the author of the most important nineteenth-century book on Browning. "*I*," said Henry, "*I* deny the divinity of Christ! I do not deny the divinity of any man."[18] Versions of the monologue's displacements of rapturous prayers to an otherworldly deity occur in two important German sources of Victorian moral theology: in Strauss's worship of a wholly secular community of faith, and in Ludwig Feuerbach's veneration of love as the most godlike human attribute. Both authors were made available to Victorian audiences through George Eliot's own translations from the German.[19]

Coleridge's conversation poems contain both the poet's one-sided conversations with silent auditors like Charles Lamb or Sara and his two-way conversations or dialogues with a divinely animated Nature. When the key to that second "language" is lost in the Victorian age with the rise of Darwinian science, the externalized dramas of a dialogue with God, who "doth teach / Himself in all, and all things in himself" ("Frost at Midnight," p. 88, ll. 61–62), are internalized as the divisions of a mind deeply and mysteriously at conflict with itself. For the perfect chiasmus of God's teaching, the private language of the poet's heart substitutes what John Donne calls a "dialogue of one."[20]

The monologue's use of the first-person pronoun tilts the genre away from drama in the direction of lyric poetry, which is utterance without *refutatio*, speech in which there is no space for any voice of dissent. That lyric tilt is also a deception, however—what Alan Sinfield calls a "feint" ("Dramatic Monologue," p. 25)—for even in using the first-person pronoun the poet detaches himself critically from his speaker, as if he were writing half of a two-way conversation, or Donne's "dialogue of one." Precisely because the auditor is mute, the monologue can

[18] Alan P. F. Sell, *Philosophical Idealism and Christian Belief* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1995), p. 201. The anecdote about Sir Henry, the author of *Browning as a Philosophical and Religious Teacher* (London: Nelson, 1891), is taken from H. J. W. Hetherington's *The Life and Letters of Sir Henry Jones* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1924), p. 43.

[19] See Ludwig Feuerbach, *The Essence of Christianity*, trans. George Eliot (New York: Harper and Row, 1957), originally published 1841; and David Friedrich Strauss, *The Life of Jesus Critically Examined*, trans. George Eliot, 3 vols. (London: Chapman, 1845).

[20] Donne, "The Ecstacy," in *John Donne*, ed. John Carey (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1990), p. 123, l. 74.

indulge fantasies that defy the critical testings of a dialogue or play. But because the trace of dialogue still survives in a monologue's silent or absent auditor, the genre is never as solitary or isolated as a lyric poem.

Apostrophe is a Janus-like trope; it is at once a turning away or deflection and a direct calling—a vocative of immediate address to an auditor. It might be thought that in naturalizing apostrophe, the monologue preserves only the second of the trope's two divergent functions. But apostrophe's art of deflection leaves its trace on the monologue, even when an intensely imagined otherness is gestured at or pointed to without being directly addressed. This swerve occurs whenever a speaker turns aside from an auditor to marvel at a work of art like the Bishop of St. Praxed's tomb or the painting of the Duke of Ferrara's Last Duchess, or even at an ideal witness like the Christian God envisaged by Karshish or David. Alternating between the swerve of a deflection and the direct address of a vocative, apostrophe's two-way flow alerts us to the odd fact that the speaker's conscious motives are seldom his deepest or most important motives.

I have argued that, like Coleridge's conversation poems, Browning's and Tennyson's dramatic monologues are poems of one-sided conversation in which a speaker's address to a silent auditor replaces Shelley's vocatives of direct address to the west wind or Keats's apostrophes to autumn. In naturalizing an archaic convention of lyric apostrophe by humanizing the objects addressed, Victorian monologues are also designed to preserve intact the poet's words of power. The dramatic monologue becomes an ascendant genre in post-Romantic literature partly because it is better equipped than lyric poetry to oppose the dogmas of a secular and scientific age in which an antiquated belief in "doing-by-saying" (including a belief in oracles, prophecies, and knowledge as divination) is in rapid and widespread retreat.

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John Marr and Other Sailors: Poetry as Private Utterance

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Now my charms are all o'erthrown,
And what strength I have's mine own,
Which is most faint

The Tempest, Epilogue, 1–3

Like his earlier *Battle-Pieces* (1866), Melville's *John Marr and Other Sailors with some Sea-Pieces* (1888) is a carefully arranged collection consisting of four parts: the first, the title poem with its prose introduction and three other poems in the form of recollections of sailors known and imagined; the second, "Sea-Pieces," two related philosophical poems; the third, "Minor Sea-Pieces"; and, finally, a collection of short related stanzas, "Pebbles." Privately printed in an edition of twenty-five copies that were intended, apparently, for family and friends, this volume even more than *Clarel* (1876) is the sign of a private, self-directed, and ironic art. These aspects are obvious in the "Inscription Epistolary" to William Clark Russell, the British writer of sea stories who had called Melville "the greatest genius [the United States] has produced" and named him "first" among "the poets of the deep," for the dedication, like Melville's description of *Clarel* in an 1884 letter to

James Billson, is "ambidexter."[1] Like Claggart, who uses reason "as an ambidexter implement for effecting the irrational,"[2] Melville as poet uses the conventions of his art to question its public authority by ironizing Russell's generous assessment of his literary accomplishments. The "Inscription Epistolary" opens and closes with two simple, direct, and heartfelt words, "Health and Content," but these simple sentiments frame a highly conventional and artificially literary performance.[3] Melville begins by describing a "private little theory" of Hilary,[4] a "companionable acquaintance," that "an American born in England, or an Englishman born in America, each in his natural make-up retains through life, and will some way evince, an intangible something imbibed with his mother's milk from the soil of his nativity" (pp. 194, 193). The "signal illustration" of his friend's theory is the "nautical novels of W. C. R. . . . [which] were impregnated with a dash of the New World's alluvium—such, say, as is discharged by our Father of Waters into the Gulf of Mexico" (pp. 193–94), as a result of the author's having been born in the United States. This theory is quickly dismissed, however, as

[1] In mid-December 1883 in a chat column in the *New York Herald* Russell is quoted as writing to A. A. Hayes that Melville is "the greatest genius your country has produced" (quoted in Jay Leyda, *The Melville Log: A Documentary Life of Herman Melville, 1819–1891*, 2 vols. [New York: Gordian Press, 1969], II, 784). In September 1884 Russell writes in *The Contemporary Review*: "Who are the poets of the deep? Their names may be counted upon the fingers of one hand: they are Herman Melville, and I rank him first; Michael Scott; Dana, the author of 'Two Years before the Mast'; and Captain Cupples, the author of 'The Green Hand'" (*Melville Log*, II, 785). In December 1884 Melville, writing to James Billson, describes *Clarel* as "a metrical affair, a pilgrimage or what not, of several thousand lines, eminently adapted for unpopularity.—The notification to you here is ambidexter, as it were: it may intimidate or allure" (*Correspondence*, ed. Lynn Horth, vol. 14 of *The Writings of Herman Melville* [Evanston and Chicago: Northwestern Univ. Press and The Newberry Library, 1993], p. 483).

[2] *Billy Budd, Sailor (An Inside Narrative)*, ed. Harrison Hayford and Merton M. Sealts, Jr. (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1962), p. 76.

[3] "Inscription Epistolary" to *John Marr and Other Sailors with Some Sea Pieces*, in *Poems*, vol. 16 of *The Works of Herman Melville*, Standard Edition (London: Constable and Co., 1924), pp. 193–196. Further references to Melville's poetry are to this edition and are included in the text.

[4] Obviously a conventional figure here, Hilary was a doctor of the church, Bishop of Poitiers (died 367), whose festival on the English Calendar is 13 January. It is also the name of a term or session of the High Court of Justice in England and the source of the phrase "to keep Hilary term," that is, "to maintain hilarity, be cheerful or merry" (OED).

"the amiable illusion of a zealous patriot eager to appropriate anything that in any department may tend to reflect added lustre upon his beloved country" (p. 195), as well as the product of a mind "lacking more or less in cautionary self-scepticism":

> Now, Hilary is that rare bird, a man at once genial and acute. Genial, I mean, without sharing much in mere gregariousness, which, with some, passes for a sort of geniality, and acute, though lacking more or less in cautionary self-scepticism. No wonder then that, however pleasing and instructive be Hilary's companionship, and much as I value the man, yet as touching more than one of his shrewder speculations I have been reluctantly led to distrust a little that penetrative perspicacity of his, a quality immoderately developed in him, and perhaps (who knows?) developed by his business, for he is an optician, daily having to do with the microscope, telescope, and other inventions for sharpening and extending our natural sight, thus enabling us mortals (as I once heard an eccentric put it) liberally to enlarge the field of our original and essential ignorance. (p. 194)

This passage ridicules Hilary's "private little theory," which is, of course, at once a theory of literature and a theory of reading, and it expresses Melville's unease with the idea of any attempt to ascribe a national dignity or a political and epistemological authority to the literary. Literary nationalism, expressed as a theory either of writing or of reading, is from Melville's point of view the result of a naive optimism, one that assumes, among other unexamined premises, that the lineage of an American language is distinct from that of English and that belief is the product of a process similar to the one that Benedict Anderson has called "*national* imaginings."[5] When Melville dismisses the "moonshine" of Hilary's "private little theory" ("Inscription," p. 194) and turns toward the hard "fact" of Russell's critical reputation, he suggests the special kind of community that results from nationalizing the literary. His personal relation

[5] *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, Revised Edition (London: Verso, 1991), p. 9. Anderson writes that "Noah Webster's 1828 (i.e., second generation) *American Dictionary of the English Language* was intended to give an official imprimatur to an American language whose lineage was distinct from that of English" (p. 197).

to his fellow novelist's work remains mediated by the opinions of the "competent judges" whose "unanimous verdicts" award that author "the naval crown in current literature":

> Upon the *Grosvenor's* first appearance—in these waters, I was going to say—all competent judges exclaimed, each after his own fashion, something to this effect: The very spit of the brine in our faces! What writer, so thoroughly as this one, knows the sea and the blue water of it, the sailor and the heart of him, the ship, too, and the sailing and handling of a ship? Besides, to his knowledge he adds invention. And, withal, in his broader humane quality he shares the spirit of Richard H. Dana, a true poet's son, our own admirable *Man before the Mast*. (p. 195)

Here, of course, are the clichés of the literary marketplace, and Melville's contempt for them is even more obviously present in a passage deleted by the author after it was queried by the proofreader:

> On the part of critics my countrymen this allusion to Dana closing their commendation of a foreign nautical writer [is?] by way very likely of *crowning* the *wall-knot* of their praise. A figure of speech the significance whereof the author of *"Forecastle Yarns"* if not every yachtsman, will practically comprehend.

"The naval crown in current literature," this passage suggests, is not the unequivocal sign of literary sovereignty that it at first seems to be. "To crown a knot" is "to form into a sort of knot by interweaving the strands of the rope so as to prevent untwisting" (OED), and this sense of crowning complicates the more familiar one of designating literary authority by the placing of a crown of garland, for it points to the way that the canonizing act is an entangled and entangling one. It is a process, apparently, that is especially equivocal when it is performed in the name of the idea of a national literature. A "wall-knot" is "a secure knot made on the end of a rope by unlaying and intertwining the strands" and that, in turn, may be crowned by intertwining the unlaid ends of a rope in a peculiar manner (OED). Melville's

See Norman Eugene Jarrard, ed., *Poems by Herman Melville: A Critical Edition of the Published Verse* (Ann Arbor: Univ. Microfilms, 1960), p. 171.

countrymen's praise of Russell, according to the logic of the nautical figure, is no more than a provincial, nationalizing gesture designed more securely to canonize the authority of Richard Henry Dana. At issue here, of course, is the question of Melville's own literary reputation and position as a writer of sea stories, and, as he had done earlier in *Pierre* (1852), in the "Inscription Epistolary" he faces that issue honestly if ironically:

> Well, in view of those unanimous verdicts summed up in the foregoing condensed delivery, with what conscientious satisfaction did I but just now, in the heading of this inscription, salute you, W. C. R., by running up your colours at my fore. Would that the craft thus emblazoned were one of some tonnage, so that the flag might be carried on a loftier spar, commanding an ampler horizon of your recognising friends. (p. 195)

As this passage implies, the "competent judges" whose verdicts justify and support Melville's inscription are the very ones responsible for the size of his very limited craft, now flying the other's colors "at my fore," meaning on its "fore-royal mast-head."[7]

Moreover, the act of replacing his American colors with those of his British contemporary must be read not only in relation to the author's implied suspicion of literary patriotism but also in the context of British and American naval history. A standard procedure, for example, in naval warfare in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries involved the deceptive practice of flying the colors of one's enemy in order to lure their ships within striking distance. One suggestion of this familiar association of the literary craft and the naval one is that both are subject to the imperial and commercial interests that govern nations and hence literary inscriptions, just as a nation's "colours" are marked by a contaminating irony.[8]

[7] This definition of "at the fore" is cited by the OED as from W. C. Russell's *Sailors' Language: A Collection of Sea Terms and Their Definitions* (1883).

[8] Compare the following passage from *White-Jacket* (1850): "Outwardly regarded our craft is a lie; for all that is outwardly seen of it is the clean-swept deck, and oft-painted planks comprised above the water-line; whereas the vast mass of our fabric, with all its store-rooms of secrets, forever slides along far under the surface" (*White-Jacket or The World in a Man-of-War*, ed. Harrison Hayford, Hershel Parker, and G. Thomas Tanselle, vol. 5 of *The Writings of Herman Melville* [Evanston and Chicago: Northwestern Univ. Press and The Newberry Library, 1970], p. 399).

> But the pleasure I take in penning these lines is such that did a literary inscription imply aught akin to any bestowment, say of benefit—which it is so very far indeed from implying—then sinner though I am, I should be tempted to repeat that divine apothegm which, were it repeated forever, would never stale: "It is more blessed to give than to receive." And though by the world at large so unworldly a maxim receives a more hospitable welcome at the ear than in than in the heart—and no wonder considering the persistent deceptiveness of so many things mundane—nevertheless, in one province—and I mean no other one than literature—not every individual, I think, at least not every one whose years ought to discharge him from the minor illusions, will dispute it, who has had experience alike in receiving and giving in one suggestive form or other sincere contemporary praise.
> (pp. 195–96)

This convoluted syntax suggests that of *The Confidence-Man* (1857), and it works to negate the very point that the passage seems to assert. The force and meaning of the paragraph's argument is undermined by the conditional structure of its first sentence. And the equivocations generated here continue to multiply as the syntax of the second sentence demonstrates the effect of the mundane on an "unworldly . . . maxim." Russell's authority as "commended novelist and liberal critic" (p. 195) is the product of equivocal cultural practices that reproduce themselves when such "matters" are "put into type," for "the printed page" is no "place" for "personal feeling," expressed again here at the end by the two simple words that frame the formal inscription: "Health and Content."

This deep distrust of public performance and the printed page marks the poems that follow the "Inscription Epistolary." Taken together, they suggest a poetry intended not for the public at large or even for Hawthorne's "Gentle" and "Indulgent" reader, but rather a poetry that seems directed to the phantoms of memory and to the poet himself, or, as in the cases of "Bridegroom Dick" and "Tom Deadlight," to one or two old companions. The title poem, with its admirable prose introduction, obviously and movingly figures Melville's sense of his own situation as a poet. Indeed, like "The Piazza," "John Marr" is an extended metaphor for the situation of the writer during the act of cre-

ation in terms of both his circumstances—that is, his history, personal and social—and the operation of his imagination. As an aging writer alienated from his social and political milieu, Melville, like John Marr, is out of place.

As "a sailor under divers flags" during his adventurous youth, one to whom "had been revealed something of the checkered globe" (pp. 197–98), Marr, in his early forties, suddenly finds himself in a place where world events have been refracted into the narrowly local, and adventure has been transformed from global wanderings to tedious laboring on a "frontier-prairie" (p. 197) in the service of a national manifest destiny.

This new world is one marked by funereal signs of "perished mound-builders" and "remnant of Indians . . . all but exterminated in their recent and final war with regular white troops, a war waged by the Red Men for their native soil and natural rights" (pp. 199–200). In place of these original inhabitants of the land are "emigrants, hereditary tillers of the soil . . . staid people, staid through habituation to monotonous hardship . . . nearly all of them sincerely, however narrowly, religious" (pp. 198–99) and dispiritingly unresponsive to others. John Marr himself is a sort of middle-aged Ishmael who, "born in America of a mother unknown, and . . . disabled at last from further maritime life," moves to the "frontier-prairie" (p. 197) and marries, only to have his wife and infant child die. No nationally imagined community is conceivable for this "kinless man" (p. 198) who is surrounded by the "forsaken" and "blank stillness" of a landscape that seems a "dried-up sea" (p. 200) and the "unresponsiveness" (p. 199) of his landlocked fellow creatures with whom no "sympathetic communion" (p. 198) is possible. Instead he is thrown "more and more upon retrospective musings," and the subjects of his poetic meditations are his old shipmates, "phantoms of the dead" who seem to possess "a dim semblance of mute life," as he tries "to get into verbal communion with them, or, under yet stronger illusion, [reproach] them for their silence" (p. 202).

Like the narrator of "The Piazza," John Marr seeks through the enchantment of words to transform landscape into seascape since "a scene quite at variance with one's antecedents may yet

prove suggestive of them" (p. 200). Hence he imagines the "enriched depressions between the long, green, graduated swells" of the prairie to be "those of ocean becalmed receiving and subduing to its own tranquillity the voluminous surge raised by some far-off hurricane of days previous" (pp. 201–2), and in the process he attempts to give voice and presence to the absent and voiceless entities of his seagoing past.[9] But, also like the narrator of "The Piazza," Marr remains haunted by the phantoms that his "retrospective musings" invoke. His words, like those letters placed in "the rude little receptive box" that "decay[s] into a mossy monument" (p. 201) in the middle of the prairie, or like those sent to the dead letter office in "Bartleby, the Scrivener," "on errands of life . . . speed to death."[10] The subjects of his meditations are "phantoms of the dead," shadows of shades, possessing only "a dim semblance of mute life." These "visionary ones," at once both the subjects and objects of the poet's words, "Alien myriads memory traces," are really illusions produced by Marr speaking to himself of "affections in the past" (pp. 202–3). This "shadowy fellowship" (p. 203) that John Marr creates with the "dim semblance of mute life" that it represents is the subject of the poet's meditation, and Marr's imagined world stands as a subversive counterpart not only to the one he inhabits but to the nationally imagined one that succeeds it, with its "municipalities and states," and to the "prairie, now everywhere intersected with wire and rail" (pp. 200–201). Writing in the

[9] Compare the following passage from "The Piazza": "In summer, too, Canute-like, sitting here, one is often reminded of the sea. For not only do long ground-swells roll the slanting grain, and little wavelets of the grass ripple over upon the low piazza, as their beach, and the blown down of dandelions is wafted like the spray, and the purple of the mountains is just the purple of the billows, and a still August noon broods upon the deep meadows, as a calm upon the Line; but the vastness and the lonesomeness are so oceanic, and the silence and the sameness, too, that the first peep of a strange house, rising beyond the trees, is for all the world like spying, on the Barbary coast, an unknown sail" ("The Piazza," in *The Piazza Tales and Other Prose Pieces, 1839–1860*, ed. Harrison Hayford, Alma A. MacDougall, and G. Thomas Tanselle, vol. 9 of *The Writings of Herman Melville* [Evanston and Chicago: Northwestern Univ. Press and The Newberry Library, 1987], pp. 3–4). See my reading of this passage as an example of the failure of the power of figuration in "The Piazza," in *The Form of American Romance* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1988), pp. 62–75.

[10] "Bartleby, the Scrivener: A Story of Wall-Street," in *The Piazza Tales*, p. 45.

1880s of a pioneering and landlocked sailor of the 1830s, Melville uses Marr's situation to figure his own career and, in so doing, he charts a bleak and disenchanting history of a country that is "over-populous with towns over-opulent" (p. 201) and represents himself as an aged Prospero, his staff broken, his "charms all o'erthrown," overwhelmed by thoughts of death.[11]

John Marr's imaginings produce a poetry of "mustering" ("A beat, a heart-beat musters all" [p. 204]) or invoking, "Alien myriads memory traces" that establish a "shadowy fellowship" with the former sailor:

> Ye float around me, form and feature—
> Tattooings, ear-rings, love-locks curled;
> Barbarians of man's simpler nature,
> Unworldly servers of the world.
> Yea, present all, and dear to me,
> Though shades, or scouring China's sea.
>
> (p. 203)

These presences are the signs of an intensely private experience, directed to no one but the speaker himself, "spiritual companions" with "a dim semblance of mute life," "visionary ones," the invocations of the phantoms of memory in a vain attempt "to get into verbal communion with them, or, under yet stronger illusion, reproaching them for their silence" (p. 202). The other three "monologue-narratives"[12] that follow in this first section of the collection reinforce the sense of a private poetry, although the feeling of absolute loneliness and the yearning melancholy it produces in the case of John Marr is less marked. In "Bridegroom Dick," for example, the narrator, an old

[11] William Shakespeare, *The Tempest*, in *The Riverside Shakespeare*, ed. G. Blakemore Evans, Herschel Baker, et al. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1974), p. 1635, Epilogue, 1. The recurring echoes to *The Tempest* throughout the collection suggest that Melville recently had reread the play and saw it as a prefiguration of his own and his country's situation. Thirty years ago Leo Marx wrote that "*The Tempest* may be read as a prologue to American literature," but Melville's reading of the play and of "the moral geography of the American imagination" differs radically from that of Marx (see Leo Marx, *The Machine in the Garden: Technology and the Pastoral Ideal in America* [New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1964], p. 72).

[12] This phrase is William H. Shurr's from "Melville's Poems: The Late Agenda," in *A Companion to Melville Studies*, ed. John Bryant (New York: Greenwood Press, 1986), p. 359.

sailor "past sixty-five" (p. 205), "boozing now on by-gone years. / My betters recall along with my peers" (p. 206), "Resailing in memory" "the brave cruises" (p. 212) of the past, speaks not only to himself but to his wife of many years, and his nostalgia is ironized by a genial and skeptical view of his current situation. His nostalgic celebration of a heroic, adventurous past (the past of his seagoing youth) and of an "Old Order" and "tradition" now lost and sadly replaced by new "strange ways" (p. 211) is framed by ironic representation of himself as an old "babbler," a "stripped old hulk" who sits with his "old woman"—he "lading [his] pipe, she stirring her tea"—and babbles "o' the good times o' yore" (p. 205). As this domestic frame suggests, while Dick celebrates the companionship and fellowship of his memories of his seagoing youth, he does not do so in an unexamined or sentimental mode. To begin with, he acknowledges a fatality apparent to both his youthful and present points of view: "It irks me now, as it troubled me then, / To think o' the fate in the madness o' men" (p. 186). He speaks here of the madness of war, of the American Civil War in particular, which seems to him now in his old age the sign of a universal fatality:

> But talk o' fellows' hearts in the wine's genial cup—
> Trap them in the fate, jam them in the strait,
> Guns speak their hearts then, and speak right up.
>
> The troublous colic o' intestine war
> It sets the bowels o' affection ajar.
> But, lord, old dame, so spins the whizzing world,
> A humming-top, ay, for the little boy-gods
> Flogging it well with their smart little rods,
> Tittering at time and the coil uncurled.
>
> (p. 211)

These wonderfully complicated lines capture nicely the tensions and mood of "Bridegroom Dick," dramatizing the transformation of the personal into the mechanical, the sounding of living voices into that of gunfire as the sickness in the body politic infects and destroys those of the "brave boys bound by vows unto Mars" (p. 209). The poetic logic of the lines works in terms of a chain of associations set in motion by the play on the words "intestine" (internal with regard to a country or people as

well as the lower part of the alimentary canal) and "bowels" (the intestines or entrails and by transference the seat of tender and sympathetic emotions, as in the "bowels" of compassion or pity). The chain ends, of course, with the admirably operative word "coil," recalling at once the happy world of the well-ordered ship, with its piles of ropes in concentric rings, as well as the coils of the human intestines, but suggesting too a destructive countermotion by way of its meaning of a noisy disturbance or turmoil, the sense that underlies Shakespeare's famous "mortal coil" (in *Hamlet*, III), the turmoil of mortal life. This set of associations leads to the final image of the "whizzing world" as a toy humming-top put into motion by the "little boy-gods" (p. 211) for their unthinking amusement, a figure that makes the universal motion of things one of death and destruction.

An example of what William Bysshe Stein describes as the "brutal naturalism" of Melville's late poetry,[13] this passage recalls the vision of *Pierre* and the short fiction, and the response of Dick's listening wife suggests, perhaps, the reactions of Melville's contemporary readers to that earlier work:

> Now, now, sweetheart, you sidle away,
> No, never you like *that* kind o' *gay*;
> But sour if I get giving truth her due,
> Honey-sweet forever, wife, will Dick be to *you*!
>
> (p. 211)

This passage helps us mark a major emphasis in the late poetry, one that works to lighten the profound pessimism that colors it, for Dick's playful response to his wife's reaction to that pessimism suggests a genuine affection as well as a self-deprecating irony. Here the poet's emphasis directs our attention to his punning use of "gay," which juxtaposes its suggestions of poetry as the gay science with its more usual meaning of joyful or perhaps even wanton. Indeed, the speaker's asides to his wife throughout the poem are marked by an affectionate Rabelaisian humor that emphasizes the importance of the domestic setting that frames the poem. Nowhere is this more obvious than in the concluding

[13] *The Poetry of Melville's Late Years: Time, History, Myth, and Religion* (Albany: State Univ. of New York Press, 1970), p. 20.

stanzas, where Dick's melancholy lament for the world of his adventurous youth and his determination to give "truth her due" (p. 211) give way to the realities of the present moment:

> Don't fidget so, wife; an old man's passion
> Amounts to no more than this smoke that I puff;
> There, there, now, buss me in good old fashion;
> A died-down candle will flicker in the snuff.
>
> But one last thing let your old babbler say,
> What Decatur's coxswain said who was long ago hearsed,
> "Take in your flying-kites, for there comes a lubber's day
> When gallant things will go, and the three-deckers first."
>
> My pipe is smoked out, and the grog runs slack;
> But bouse away, wife, at your blessed Bohea;
> This empty can here must needs solace me—
> Nay, sweetheart, nay; I take that back;
> Dick drinks from your eyes and he finds no lack!
>
> (p. 210)

The view of the poet that emerges from these lines—an "old babbler" whose passion for words gives way in the end to the pleasure of comforts and the consolations of life with his aged companion who "listen[s] again for the sake e'en o' me" (p. 205)—no doubt misses much of the religious and social subversiveness as well as the Rabelaisian bawdry but provides, when all is said and done, a solid and important presence.

A related but somewhat darker view of the poetic act is represented in "Tom Deadlight." Like John Marr's verses, those of Tom Deadlight are introduced by a prose headnote that clearly indicates that the poem offers yet another metaphor for the experience and situation of the poet during the act of creation. Set aboard a homeward-bound but tempest-driven British warship in 1810, the poem records the dying words of a "grizzled petty officer" as he swings in his hammock in the "*sick-bay* under the tiered gun-decks" of the ship. "Wandering in his mind though with glimpses of sanity," he "sings by snatches his good-bye and last injunctions to two messmates, his watchers." His song is not his own, however, since "names and phrases, with here and there a line, or part of one ... he involuntarily derives

as he does the measure, from a famous old sea-ditty, whose cadences, long rife, and now humming in the collapsing brain, attune the last flutterings of distempered thought" (p. 220).

"As a man-of-war that sails through the sea, so this earth that sails through the air," Melville wrote in *White-Jacket* (p. 398), and he returns in "Tom Deadlight" to the ship as microcosm-figure once again, in order to comment on the nature of his "craft." Like the name of its speaker, the poem derives its meaning from a series of punning references that link the nautical world with death and poetry. A dead-light is "a strong wooden or iron shutter fixed outside a cabin-window or port-hole in a storm, to prevent water from entering," and it also refers to the "luminous appearance" known as "corpse-light" or "corpse-candle" "seen over putrescent bodies" (OED). The ship itself, pummeled by the storm that has "doused all the glims . . . in sky," must steer by "Dead reckoning" (p. 221)—that is to say without astronomical observation—as it sets its course for "Deadman," or "Dedman's Point, near Plymouth."[11]

> Dead reckoning, says *Joe*, it won't do to go by;
> But they doused all the glims, Matt, in sky t'other night.
> Dead reckoning is good for to sail for the Deadman;
> And Tom Deadlight he thinks it may reckon near right.
> (p. 221)

Of course, the poem acknowledges in an obvious way the fact that humankind is always on the way to death, and these lines in particular point to the role that poetic language plays in bringing that fact into the open. The words and cadences "humming in the collapsing brain," signs of "the last flutterings of distempered thought," are equivocal both in the sense that they are derived rather than original and in the sense that, as they appear there on the printed page providing their speaker with an afterlife, they take the form of flotsam or rubbish rather than that of a dignified memorial or monument. Tom's words are remainders, bits and pieces broken off from nautical discourse and "wrested into incoherency" (p. 220).

[11] Robert Penn Warren, "Notes on the Text," in *Selected Poems of Herman Melville: A Reader's Edition*, ed. Warren (New York: Random House, 1970), p. 422.

"Jack Roy," the last of the four poems that form the first section of the collection, offers yet another view of the aging poet and the function of poetry. As both Robert Penn Warren and Henning Cohen note, the poem recalls the figure of Jack Chase, celebrated earlier by Melville in *White-Jacket* and to whom he was to dedicate *Billy Budd*.[15] The poem at once recalls and memorializes the songs of generations of maintop "halyard singers," songs that affirm the joys of life in the face of its dangers and contingencies, a view of life embodied best by Jack Roy: "Magnanimous in humour, when the splintering shot fell, / 'Toothpicks a-plenty, lads, thank 'em with a shell!'" (p. 222). It is Jack's "larking with . . . life," his lyrical celebrations of its pleasures, that the poet's own song joys in and memorializes: "Heroic in thy levity wert thou, Jack Roy" (p. 223).

The remaining poems in the collection focus on the perilous world in which the memorialized sailors lived and died and in which the poet now attempts to voice the allegory of their demise in the face of "thoughts that tongue can tell no word of" (p. 233). "The Haglets" and "The Aeolian Harp," which together form the second section of the collection, "Sea-Pieces," illustrate nicely the status of poetic language in a world represented by the "dense stolidity of walls" in "The Berg" (p. 241).

"The Haglets" begins with a curious monumentalizing and memorializing gesture as the poet describes an imaginary church, a "chapel bare, with walls sea-beat," outside of which stands "a carved memorial stone" on which is sculptured "a form recumbent, swords at feet, . . . Trophies at head, and kelp for a winding-sheet." He then goes on to "invoke th[e] ghost" of the "neglected fane" and to "adjure the recumbent effigy . . . To tell the cenotaph's intent— . . . Reveal why faggotted swords are at feet, / Why trophies appear and weeds are the winding-sheet" (p. 224).

Like "John Marr," this poetry too is one of invocation and adjuration, but whereas "Marr" seeks to give speech to the phantoms of the dead, the poet here seeks to give voice to the lan-

[15] See Warren, pp. 423–24, and Henning Cohen, "Comment on the Poems," in *Selected Poems of Herman Melville*, ed. Cohen (New York: Fordham Univ. Press, 1991), p. 213.

guage of senseless stone, and by doing so to rescue the enchanted dead from anonymity. His poetic tomb becomes a speaking monument that narrates the circumstances that lead to its construction. The poet invokes the tradition of romantic nature poetry, in particular that of the elegy and the epitaph, but he does so in order to mark his distance from it. The topoi of the speaking monument suggests Wordsworth and the tradition of the epitaph, while individual details in the first two stanzas and elsewhere in the poem echo Thomas Gray's great elegy. But the setting here, unlike those of Wordsworth's inscriptive poems, is an invented not a recovered one, and Melville rescues his "unhonour'd Dead" from anonymity by the very "trophies," the "storied urn or animated bust," that are explicitly missing from Gray's country churchyard.[16] Moreover, the elegiac narrative that follows the poet's earnest and solemn call is not written in the language of nature. The "neglected fane" is "washed by the waters' long lament" (p. 224), but that is not the poet's; his elegiac narrative will emphasize the absolute Otherness of a nature marked by the "screams" of "sea-fowl" over the "gurgling grave" of the ocean (pp. 225–26). Indeed, "The Haglets" ironically marks the "favouring breeze," the moonlight, and the rainbow—three favorite romantic symbols for the harmony of the human and the natural worlds:

> But who a flattering tide may trust,
> Or favouring breeze, or aught in end?—
> Careening under startling blasts
> The sheeted towers of sails impend;
> While, gathering bale, behind is bred
> A livid storm-bow, like a rainbow dead.
>
> (p. 207)

Melville's poem sardonically rejects the possibility of any spiritualization of nature. Indeed, as the sign of death, nature is the realm of the absolute Other and absolute end. The victorious, homeward-bound ship, its compass reversed by "the brag of

[16] Thomas Gray, "Elegy Written in a Country Church Yard," in *The Complete Poems of Thomas Gray: English, Latin, and Greek*, ed. H. W. Starr and J. R. Hendrickson (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1966), pp. 39–41, ll. 93, 38, 41.

arms, / Transferred in site" (p. 227), smashes onto the "rings of reefs" (p. 230) on "the night that ends the week— / Ends day and week and month and year," as "the Old Year dies at sea" (p. 228). And this is the end that has been foreshadowed by the "shadowing three" (p. 229), the haglets, a small species of gull but punningly "little hags," or the Fates (see Warren, p. 247), whose meaning finally becomes clear as the stricken ship sinks:

> Like shuttles hurrying in the looms
> Aloft through rigging frayed they ply—
> Cross and recross—weave and unweave:
> Then lock the web with clinching cry
> Over the seas on seas that clasp
> The weltering wreck where gurgling ends the gasp.
>
> (p. 230)

Having previously circled the defeated Spanish flagship while it goes to its "gurgling grave," the haglets' presence here makes clear that "victors drown— / Perish, even as the vanquished did" (p. 230). The "flags and arms," trophies and prizes of war, become funeral trophies—as in Gray's "If Mem'ry o'er their Tomb no Trophies raise" ("Elegy," l. 38)—and their captor now sleeps "in liquid night":

> Embedded deep with shells
> And drifted treasure deep,
> Forever he sinks deeper in
> Unfathomable sleep—
> His cannon round him thrown,
> His sailors at his feet,
> The wizard sea enchanting them
> Where never haglets beat.
> On nights when meteors play
> And light the breakers' dance,
> The Oreads from the caves
> With silvery elves advance;
> And up from ocean stream,
> And down from heaven far,
> The rays that blend in dream
> The abysm and the star.
>
> (p. 231)

These final stanzas of the poem return us to the beginning ones, to the poetic tomb that tells of death, and in the process suggest that all poetry is epitaphic. Here, once again, the focus is obviously literary, with reminders of Gray's "Elegy" and *The Tempest*. The Admiral's "Unfathomable sleep" echoes Gray's "dark unfathom'd caves of ocean" ("Elegy," l. 54), while the unusual "abysm" recalls Prospero's question to Miranda in *The Tempest*: "What seest thou else / In the dark backward and abysm of time?" (I, ii, 49–50). And the two stanzas taken together suggest Ariel's song from the same play:

> Full fadom five thy father lies,
>   Of his bones are coral made;
> Those are pearls that were his eyes:
>   Nothing of him that doth fade,
> But doth suffer a sea-change
> Into something rich and strange.
> Sea-nymphs hourly ring his knell:
> Hark now I hear them—ding-dong bell.
> (*Tempest*, I, ii, 397–405)

This vision, of course, is an illusion produced by Prospero's "tricksy spirit" (V, i, 226), who is controlled by his master's staff and book, the sources of his "potent art," an art that he renounces at the end of the play when he promises to "break my staff, / Bury it certain fadoms in the earth, / And deeper than did ever plummet sound / I'll drown my book" (V, i, 50, 54–57). In framing his ironic narrative of death with stanzas that echo the texts of Gray and Shakespeare, Melville not only emphasizes once again, as he had earlier in *Battle-Pieces* and *Clarel*, that poetry is the art of hinting the truth that "tongue can tell no word of," but he also anticipates his own death by associating himself with Prospero—who at the end of the play, his "charms o'erthrown" (*Tempest*, Epilogue, 1), retires to Milan to contemplate his grave—as well as with Gray, who ends his elegy by writing his own epitaph.[17]

"The Aeolian Harp," companion poem to "The Haglets,"

[17] In "The Armies of the Wilderness" Melville writes of the "riddle of death, of which the slain / Sole solvers are" (*Poems*, p. 75), and in *Clarel* he names it "that truth no type shall set" (*Clarel: A Poem and Pilgrimage in the Holy Land*, ed. Harrison Hayford, Alma A. MacDougall, Hershel Parker, and G. Thomas Tanselle, vol. 12 of *The Writings of Herman*

juxtaposes the voice of nature with that of the poet and represents a "sea-change" very different from the one described by the framing stanzas of the previous poem. Here, too, the context is literary, for behind the poem, as William H. Shurr has pointed out, is a rich history of image and idea ranging from the works of Shakespeare to those of Coleridge and Emerson.[18] Needless to say, however, Melville's "wailing" harp is not the voice of Coleridge's "one life within us and abroad" or Emerson's sound that "can mend the happiest days, / And charm the anguish of the worst."[19] Here is "less a strain ideal / Than Ariel's rendering of the Real" ("Aeolian Harp," p. 232). And that "Real" is a tale of "sea-sorrow" (*Tempest*, I, ii, 170) suggested by "a picture stamped in memory's mint" ("Aeolian Harp," p. 232), that of a wrecked lumberman. "Dismasted and adrift," "oozy as the oyster-bank," "waterlogged," "by trailing weeds beclogged," the wreck drifts "pilotless on pathless way" (pp. 232–33). In this case the "wizard sea" does not enchant as it works its change but reclaims as it transforms that which had once belonged to the human world. The result is an object more deadly than the "sunken reef," for it drifts "waylayingly," now "fatal only to the *other*" (p. 233).

For the poet the "wail" of the wind-harp generates a picture that hints at the change that can never be remembered or narrated because it can never be present: the change that is death. "Well the harp of Ariel wails / Thoughts that tongue can tell no word of!" (p. 233). As the Other of consciousness and language, the blank that inhabits human life, death is never experienced as an event. It is an area in the mind that can never be humanized—that is to say faced or named directly—and as such it is a reminder of the inhuman, of physical nature, represented in *John Marr* by the "implacable Sea."[20]

Melville [Evanston and Chicago: Northwestern Univ. Press and The Newberry Library, 1991], p. 242; 233, l. 63).

[18] See Shurr, *The Mystery of Iniquity: Melville as Poet, 1857–1891* (Lexington: Univ. Press of Kentucky, 1972), pp. 134–35.

[19] Coleridge, "The Eolian Harp" (1795), in *Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, ed. H. J. Jackson (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1985), p. 28, l. 26; and Emerson, "Maiden Speech of the Aeolian Harp" (1867), in *Collected Poems and Translations*, ed. Harold Bloom and Paul Kane (New York: Library of America, 1994), p. 229.

[20] I am indebted here to J. Hillis Miller for his discussion of death as a figure in *Ariadne's Thread: Story Lines* (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1992), pp. 250–51.

That sea is the subject of the seven epigrams, grouped together and entitled "Pebbles," that conclude *John Marr*. As a group these short pieces echo the primary themes and motifs of the collection and bring it to a decorous and proper close.[21] As a form of writing associated with the satiric and the ironic as well as the use of an echoing device distinguished for the brilliance of its punning, the epigram seems especially suitable for Melville's purposes here. The world of *John Marr* is a world marked by "the vague reserve of heaven" (p. 225) and "the apathy of Nature" (p. 199), a world where the poet's voice is returned neither by an echoing landscape nor by the voices of his fellow creatures. John Marr, like Wordsworth in "The Mountain Echo," seeks "Answers, and we know not whence; / Echoes from beyond the grave, / Recognised intelligence," but hears only the sound of his own words.[22] The first "Pebbles" epigram underscores the logic that governs such a world:

Though the Clerk of the Weather insist,
  And lay down the weather-law,
Pintado and gannet they wist
That the winds blow whither they list
  In tempest or flaw.

(p. 243)

Here the poet asserts the failure of scientific and legalistic formulas to predict and control natural forces. The insistent declarations of the Clerk of the Weather, "an imaginary functionary humorously supposed to control the state of the weather" (OED), are set against the sounds of seabirds and the force of the wind. The ironic aspects of the juxtaposition are exposed by the witty wordplay and the comic rhymes of the epigram. The words "lay down" have the primary sense of declaring what the law with regard to the weather is, but the force of that meaning is undermined by a secondary sense, the tendency of the force of the wind or sea to make a vessel lie on her side. And the ironic

[21] As Jarrard points out (p. 224), the "John Marr" manuscript indicates that Melville considered calling this section "Epigrams."

[22] William Wordsworth, "Yes, it was the Mountain Echo" (1807), in *The Poetical Works of William Wordsworth*, ed. E. de Selincourt, 5 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1940–49), II, 266, ll. 14–16.

tension between these two meanings is reinforced by a similar one between the primary and secondary meanings of "flaw," a word that refers at once to a sudden burst or squall of wind and to an invalidating defect in a legal document. Even the word "tempest" is suggestive in this context, given the multiple references in the collection to Shakespeare's play, for there Prospero possesses the art to direct the winds and waters, and the play's title names at once a natural force and a man-made form that manages to contain and control it.

In Melville's world, however, nature and consciousness, imagination and perception are completely distinct realms, the world's being an absolute Other:

> Old are the creeds, but stale the schools,
>   Revamped as the mode may veer.
> But Orm from the schools to the beaches strays
> And, finding a Conch hoar with time, he delays
>   And reverent lifts it to ear.
> That Voice, pitched in far monotone,
>   Shall it swerve? shall it deviate ever?
> The Seas have inspired it, and Truth—
>   Truth, varying from sameness never.
>
> (p. 243)

Orm, author of the *Ormulum* (circa 1200 A.D.), a collection of metrical homilies on biblical texts, and the representative here of the changing scholastic as well as poetic attempts to establish a dialogue between nature and consciousness, hears in the conch the sea-inspired monotone that is the only "Voice" of nature, "for echo the seas have none":

> In hollows of the liquid hills
>   Where the long Blue Ridges run,
> The flattery of no echo thrills,
>   For echo the seas have none;
> Nor aught that gives man back man's strain—
> The hope of his heart, the dream in his brain.
>
> (p. 243)

Echoes for Melville are not, as they are for Wordsworth, figures of representation pointing to a direct connection between

the human and natural worlds. The poetic tradition invoked by the poet's figuring the waves as mountains, a tradition where echoes are understood as "Images of voice"[23] and nature is represented as sending an "Unsolicited reply / To a babbling wanderer" (Wordsworth, "Mountain Echo," ll. 5–6), only works to emphasize the distance that separates it from the poet's sea world:

> On ocean where the embattled fleets repair,
> Man, suffering inflictor, sails on sufferance there.
>
> (p. 241)

Men who go down to the sea in ships for purposes of war and commerce, as well as the sea poets who compete for "the naval crown in current literature," indeed all those who claim to know "the sea and the blue water of it" (p. 195), are like the Clerk of the Weather, the victims of a humorous delusion. Apparently active agents, they are in fact in the position of the person who continues to hold an estate without the express leave of the owner; to sail on "sufferance," then, is either to do so "without express permission, under conditions of passive acquiescence or base tolerance" (OED), or, perhaps, to do so "by divine permission," "*by the sufferance of God*" (OED). It is this insight, apparently, that leads the poet in the next epigram in "Pebbles" to give the sea a voice by way of the trope of personification:

> Implacable I, the old implacable Sea:
> Implacable most when most I smile serene—
> Pleased, not appeased, by myriad wrecks in me.
>
> (p. 244)

As we have seen, "Pebbles" as a collection emphasizes the priority of the natural or phenomenal over the human (in particular the linguistic), but it does so by emphasizing the power and force of language. No less imaginary than the Clerk of the Weather, the "implacable I," like the "I AM" of the Old Testament, is from the point of view a figure that silences even

[23] William Wordsworth, "On the Power of Sound" (1835), in *Poetical Works*, II, 324, l. 34.

as it seems to confer a voice, for it suggests the linguistic artifice by which the trope of personification operates. That process here takes the form of the uncovering of the natural or material veiled by the trope, the "myriad wrecks," "fatal only to the *other*" (p. 233), that are evidence of the shapeless materiality behind human forms.

Nevertheless, following this revelation is a reaffirmation of the figural, a picking up and extending of the collection's operative tropes:

> Curled in the comb of yon billow Andean,
>   Is it the Dragon's heaven-challenging crest?
> Elemental mad ramping of ravening waters—
>   Yet Christ on the Mount, and the dove in her nest!
>
> (p. 244)

The biblical echoes dominating these lines continue and develop a theme hinted at in the first epigram, whose fourth line ("That the winds blow whither they list") echoes Christ's response to Nicodemus's question "How can a man be born when he is old?" (John 3:4):

> Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.
>
> That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.
>
> Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again.
>
> The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.
>
> (John 3:5–8)

Nineteenth-century commentators on this passage emphasize the symbolic function of water and wind—the water standing for a "*thorough spiritual purification by the operation of the Holy Ghost*"—and further point out that the "element of *water* and the operation of the *Spirit* are brought together in a glorious

evangelical prediction of Ezekiel,"[24] which anticipates the actions of John, the Baptist:

> Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you.
>
> A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. (Ezekiel 36:25–26)

Like water and spirit, breath and spirit (one word in Hebrew and Greek) are constantly brought together in scripture as analogous, as in Ezekiel 37:9:

> Then said he unto me, Prophesy unto the wind, prophesy, son of man, and say to the wind, Thus saith the Lord God; Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live.

Melville's lines, however, juxtapose these passages with others that establish a set of countersuggestions. The "Dragon's heaven-challenging crest" (Melville, p. 244) is a reference to the dragon-authorized beast who rises from the sea in Revelation 13 to "blaspheme" God's name and "to make war with the saints, and to overcome them" (Revelation 13:6–7).[25] His "crest," of course, is at once that of a battle helmet, the ridge of the wave, and also, by way of "billow Andean," the peak of a mountain—a chain of associations that recalls not only the "Blue Ridges" of epigram III of "Pebbles" but also the complicated, subversive figurative patterns of *Pierre* that associate water and mountaintops with Satanic rebellion and the fictions of divine and poetic speech. It is these fictions and the tropes that support them that the poet at once exposes and stubbornly, if privately and obscurely, celebrates, as the lines of the concluding epigram acknowledge:

[24] Robert Jamieson, A. R. Fausset, and David Brown, *A Commentary, Critical and Explanatory, on the Old and New Testaments*, 2 vols. (Philadelphia: S. S. Scranton & Co., 1872), II, 131.

[25] See also Milton's description of the Serpent in *Paradise Lost*, Book IX, ll. 525–26: "But as in gaze admiring: Oft he bow'd / His turret Crest, and sleek enamell'd Neck" (*Paradise Lost*, in *Complete Poems and Major Prose*, ed. Merritt Y. Hughes [New York: Odyssey Press, 1957], p. 390).

Healed of my hurt, I laud the inhuman Sea—
Yea, bless the Angels Four that there convene;
For healed I am even by their pitiless breath
  Distilled in wholesome dew named rosmarine.

John Marr ends, appropriately, with the personal voice of the poet reconfirming the introspective, autobiographical aspects of the collection as he looks to poetry and to the memories of his seagoing past in order to help relieve his "sea-sorrow," marked both by his sense of isolation and the dread of approaching death. The destructive winds, in tempest or flaw, although not subject to "weather-law," may be figured or represented in poetic language, transformed here into the "pitiless breath" of the "four angels standing on the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth" (Revelation 7:1), by the restored poet who, it appears, is healed by his very power to figure and refigure. For here wind and sea combine through a process of distillation to produce the healing herb, rosemary or *Rosmarinus*, literally sea-dew.[26]

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[26] Melville no doubt is also referring here to his love of roses and rose gardening and perhaps has in mind his own Rose Poems left unpublished at his death, poems that, as John Bryant brilliantly has shown, are at once deeply personal and poetically complex (see John Bryant, "Melville's Rose Poems: As They Fell," *Arizona Quarterly* 52, no. 4 [1996]: 49–84). The following lines from Anacreon point to the literary tradition that Melville is invoking: "The rose distils a healing balm / The beating pulse of pain to calm; / Preserves the cold inurned clay, / And mocks the vestige of decay" (*Odes of Anacreon*, trans. Thomas Moore, 2 vols. [London: J. Carpenter, Old Bond Street, 1806?], II: 62). Melville's set of the Harper's Family Classical Library included a volume of Anacreon. See Merton M. Sealts Jr., *Melville's Reading, Revised and Enlarged Edition* (Columbia: Univ. of South Carolina Press, 1988), pp. 167–68.

Mythic Language and Gender Subversion: The Case of Ruskin's Athena

SHARON ARONOFSKY WELTMAN

In *The Queen of the Air* (1869), a mythological study of the goddess Athena, John Ruskin presents a series of binary oppositions that he immediately conflates: Athena and Medusa, air and earth, bird and snake, formation and destruction, science and myth, male and female. But, as he says in *The Ethics of the Dust* (1866), for Ruskin "there can be no communion where there is no distinction."[1] That is why he does not relinquish the polarities he appears to undo; rather he maintains them in an ever-collapsing dynamic. Ruskin documents the instability of his oppositions through a bizarre "natural language," where real-life creatures such as birds and snakes serve as eternal hieroglyphs, signifying universally recognizable abstractions. That seemingly fixed signs in Athena's hieroglyphic code inevitably change is clear from Ruskin's ready acknowledgment of Darwin's evolutionary theory. But evolution quickly slips into a wild image of degenerative metamorphosis, where all the divisions that Ruskin has so laboriously noted dissolve. By emphasizing Athena's connection to her Medusan alter-ego, Ruskin associates the immortal goddess with the very

[1] John Ruskin, *The Ethics of the Dust*, in *The Works of John Ruskin*, ed. E. T. Cook and Alexander Wedderburn, 39 vols. (London: George Allen, 1903–12), XVIII, 328. Further references to Ruskin's works are to this edition and appear in the text.

principle of mutability.[2] Since Ruskin also identifies Athena with each seemingly opposed animal signifier in his living language of hieroglyphs, he subverts all linguistic difference and ultimately—as I argue in this essay—feminizes signification itself.

Ruskin's *The Queen of the Air* undercuts all bipolar oppositions, but its subversion of strictly differentiated gender dichotomy is particularly striking given Ruskin's deserved reputation as a sexist. Ruskin's complex attitude toward women has long been important to feminist and Victorian studies; over a quarter-century ago Kate Millett published *Sexual Politics* and its famous attack on Ruskin's lecture from *Sesame and Lilies*, "Of Queens' Gardens" (1865).[3] Millett charged Ruskin with promoting a sugar-coated but perfidious system of separate spheres for men and women, a system dependent upon the concept of complementary opposites. Yet shortly after Ruskin produced his idealized vision of housewives in "Of Queens' Gardens," he created a new ideal queen in *The Queen of the Air*, this time elaborated from Athena, the most masculine of Greek goddesses. Through his mythopoesis, Ruskin—patriarchal and patronizing in so many ways—disrupts both conventional gender categories and his own implication in them.

As a mode of discourse, classical mythology has been seized upon by feminist critics as both positive and negative.[4] Some theorists derive from myth the principal imagery for a world of

[2] Because of Medusa's initial transformation and her consequent ability to transform others, she epitomizes dangerous change.

[3] See *Sexual Politics* (New York: Doubleday, 1970).

[4] Since Ruskin alludes to Greek, Roman, and Egyptian mythology in the texts at hand, I limit myself here to that material. However, myths of other cultures exemplify the same theoretical points about the usefulness of mythic language. I do not seek to determine for now the root cause of myth's power (psychoanalytic, linguistic, cultural, etc.), only to show that it provides a potent vehicle for imagining something other than bipolar opposition and for subverting strict gender dichotomy. Lillian Feder ably outlines many definitions of myth in the first two chapters of *Ancient Myth in Modern Poetry* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1971), stopping short of post-structuralism, for which the reader should consult Roland Barthes, *Mythologies*, trans. Annette Lavers (New York: Noonday Press-Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1972); Jacques Derrida, "White Mythology: Metaphor in the Text of Philosophy," trans. F. C. T. Moore, *New Literary History* 6 (1974): 5–74; and Hélène Cixous, "The Laugh of the Medusa," trans. Keith Cohen and Paula Cohen, *Signs* 1 (1976): 875–93 (rpt. in *Feminisms: An Anthology of Literary Theory and Criticism*, ed. Robyn R. Warhol and Diane Price Herndl [New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers Univ. Press, 1991], pp. 334–49).

greater freedom for women, while others oppose what seems an essentializing stance.[5] Does myth presuppose an ahistorical, transcendent, eternal model, which forms part of the oppressive mechanism of patriarchal culture? Or can myth act as an agent of empowerment, revealing the potency of the goddess as a challenge to the larger paradigm that constrains her?[6] It is hardly surprising that in myth, feminists have found visions of powerful womanhood to sustain them. In part, myth is where culture stores such images, out of the way of any real political consequence but readily available for escapist art. At the same time, as a discourse, myth is genuinely powerful, providing the tools not only for reinterpreting women as politically significant but also for redefining gender itself in ways beyond traditional, empirical, rigidly bipolar logic. In other words, while myth is situated historically within the culture that produces or appropriates it, mythic discourse gives the illusion of being ahistorical and transcendent without necessarily carrying with these qualities the restrictive elements of contemporary mainstream religion. Free of extant rules, clergy, judgment, or any other institutional aspects of worship, myth offers an aura of antique authority even though no one (except maybe Ruskin) believes in its deities. As Ruskin uses myth, the answer to both questions posed above is yes, suggesting a third way in which mythic discourse can function: to supply a time-honored language of rupture and fluidity.[7] Ruskin's use of mythology shows it to be a rich resource to mine for an alternative vocabulary that retains a cultural cache of value and respect, through which he tentatively explores new gender possibilities.

[5] Most famously, Cixous's "The Laugh of the Medusa" offers a feminist manifesto born of Medusan power.

[6] Both Marina Warner in *Monuments and Maidens: The Allegory of the Female Form* (New York: Atheneum, 1985) and Joseph A. Kestner in *Mythology and Misogyny: The Social Discourse of Nineteenth-Century British Classical Subject Painting* (Madison: Univ. of Wisconsin Press, 1989) discuss the former view with regard to Ruskin. Nina Auerbach in *Woman and the Demon: The Life of a Victorian Myth* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1982), and Dinah Birch in "*The Ethics of the Dust*: Ruskin's Authorities," *Prose Studies*, 12 (1989), 147–58, take the latter.

[7] While Ruskin's mythopoesis does not stylistically coincide with *l'écriture féminine*, resemblances exist nonetheless. Certainly a direct line of inheritance could be traced between Ruskin and the French avant garde via Proust, who translated the French edition of *Sesame and Lilies*. See Marcel Proust, *On Reading Ruskin*, ed. and trans. Jean Autret, William Burford, and Phillip J. Wolfe (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1987).

The practical result of such instability is that Ruskin encouraged women of the nineteenth century to achievements based on their supposed feminine nature that others with whom he is normally grouped, most notably Coventry Patmore, opposed.[8] Examples of his efforts to promote talented women abound. Among many others, he encouraged Lizzie Siddal and Kate Greenaway to pursue painting.[9] He paid Octavia Hill first for drawing and later for managing low-income housing, helping to inaugurate the new career of social work for women, even though he repeatedly avowed his disapproval of women's working professionally.[10] This need not make him a hypocrite, as Millett suggests; his contradictory statements and actions indicate the complexity of his thinking on this question, and they further show how his ideas proliferate beyond the capacity of his own philosophical categories—or those of Victorian culture—to contain them.

Mary Poovey offers another example of Ruskin's contradicting himself about women, through her discussion of Florence Nightingale in *Uneven Developments*. Poovey demonstrates that Ruskin's applause for women who act as mothers to the motherless helped create the cultural space for women to find professions in nursing—and, I would add, philanthropy, social work and social criticism—by defining those tasks as inherently feminine.[11] Poovey proves the importance of gender as a site of contestation in the Victorian period, played out in many more than the discourses her book explores. I argue that myth is another

[8] Elizabeth K. Helsinger's formulation of the "angel out of the house" to describe Ruskin's queenly housewife and her task of helping the poor shows how Ruskin uses the domestic ideal to campaign for women's efforts outside the home. See Elizabeth K. Helsinger, Robin Lauterbach Sheets, and William Veeder, *The Woman Question: Defining Voices 1837–1883*, vol. 1 of *The Woman Question: Society and Literature in Britain and America 1837–1883*, 3 vols. (New York: Garland Publishing, 1983). Another helpful book by Helsinger is *Ruskin and the Art of the Beholder* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1982).

[9] Jan Marsh supplies many other instances of Ruskin's patronage, encouragement and instruction of Victorian women artists in "Resolve to be a Great Paintress": Women Artists in Relation to John Ruskin as Critic and Patron," *Nineteenth Century Contexts* 18 (1994): 177–85.

[10] Jeffrey L. Spear describes Ruskin's support of and appreciation for Octavia Hill's accomplishments in *Dreams of an English Eden: Ruskin and His Tradition in Social Criticism* (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1984).

[11] See Poovey, *Uneven Developments: The Ideological Work of Gender in Mid-Victorian England* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1988). For the feminine qualities of Ruskin's social criticism, see Birch, "Ruskin's Womanly Mind," *Essays in Criticism* 38 (1988): 308–24.

such discourse, but in addition to both constructing and reflec ing Victorian gender definition, Ruskin's mythopoetic projec simultaneously inscribes and erases gender difference.

Other Ruskin critics have already pointed in this directio In *Woman and the Demon* Nina Auerbach contends that a myth c a powerful female figure represents real but nonpolitical pc tency for women in Victorian society. In "Ruskin and the Matr archal Logos" Paul Sawyer joins Auerbach in seeing the mythi force of Athena as a positive representation of feminine powei although Sawyer considers it political compensation for women practical powerlessness. Sawyer describes the way in which Rus kin invests fictive or mythic woman with precisely the power tha real women do not have in society: "As a mythological abstrac tion . . . Ruskin's goddess-queen, like his queenly housewives, in habits the looking-glass world . . . in order to perpetuate . . . th bourgeois order."[12] But if myth has political implications in th way it shapes public consciousness, then Ruskin's creation of new Athena, one whose powers exceed previous notions of femi nine authority, may create a new power for real women as wel at first valorizing their endeavors within already approved, do mestically defined spheres (which his works were already help ing to widen) and later through response to the gender subver sion that constitutes Athena's existence. The fact that Ruskin famous description of Home and its queen in "Of Queens' Gar dens" can be read as either misogynist or feminist[13] identifie

[12] Paul Sawyer, "Ruskin and the Matriarchal Logos," in *Victorian Sages and Cultur Discourse: Renegotiating Gender and Power*, ed. Thaïs E. Morgan (New Brunswick, N.J.: Ru gers Univ. Press, 1990), p. 140. Sawyer recognizes that the power generated by mythi representation exceeds the boundaries that would contain it as a hegemonic construc he says that Ruskin's myth of Athena both constructs and disrupts the domestic ide of woman. Even while delineating how Ruskin's mythology participates in the construc tion of the bourgeois subject, Sawyer points out the radical implications of Athena a the female Logos. He shows how for Ruskin the ultimate creative force finally is fem nine, suggesting that, after all, there is more significance to Athena's power than pro viding illusory status to women to elevate and valorize their inferior position. See als Sawyer's *Ruskin's Poetic Argument: The Design of the Major Works* (Ithaca: Cornell Univ Press, 1985).

[13] For the most significant contributions to the debate on *Sesame and Lilies* see Ka Millett, "The Debate over Women: Ruskin Versus Mill," *Victorian Studies*, 14 (1970), 63 82 (adapted from *Sexual Politics*); David Sonstroem, "Millett Versus Ruskin: A Defens of Ruskin's 'Of Queens' Gardens,'" *Victorian Studies*, 20 (1977), 283–97; Sandra M. Gil bert and Susan Gubar, *The Madwoman in the Attic: The Woman Writer and the Nineteenth

the conflicting impulses at work within Ruskin's essays and implies that through the use of myth, Ruskin suggests a fluid concept of gender that simple political categories cannot accommodate. The disruptive force of Ruskin's discourse lies in the contradiction between the mythic power of the domestic goddess that he creates and the real but very limited power that Victorian women actually exercised from within this domestically defined sphere.

Throughout the 1860s Ruskin set up and broke down gender distinctions in his writing, often adding characteristics he first defined as masculine to his idea of the feminine principle.[11] For example, in "Of Queens' Gardens" Ruskin

Century Literary Imagination (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1979); Auerbach, Helsinger et al., *The Woman Question*; Birch, "Ruskin's Womanly Mind"; and Deborah Epstein Nord, "Mill and Ruskin on the Woman Question Revisited," in *Teaching Literature: What Is Needed Now*, ed. James Engell and David Perkins (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1988), pp. 73–83. For analyses of Ruskin's approach to gender, see Sawyer, "Ruskin and the Matriarchal Logos"; Richard Dellamora, *Masculine Desire: The Sexual Politics of Victorian Aestheticism* (Chapel Hill: Univ. of North Carolina Press, 1990), pp. 117–29; Sharon Aronofsky Weltman, "Gender and the Architectonics of Metaphor: Ruskin's Pathetic Fallacy in *The Ethics of the Dust*," *Prose Studies* 16, no. 2 (1993): 41–61; and Sheila Emerson, *Ruskin: The Genesis of Invention* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1993), pp. 207–28. For more related discussions of Ruskin, Ruskin's use of myth, or myth in the Victorian period, see Linda M. Austin, "Ruskin and the Ideal Woman," *South Central Review* 4, no. 4 (1987): 28–39; Jennifer M. Lloyd, "Raising Lilies: Ruskin and Women," *Journal of British Studies* 34 (1995): 325–50; Birch, *Ruskin's Myths* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988); Janet Burstein, "Victorian Mythography and the Progress of the Intellect," *Victorian Studies* 18 (1975): 309–24; Bram Dijkstra, *Idols of Perversity: Fantasies of Feminine Evil in Fin-de-Siècle Culture* (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1986); Karen Elias-Button, "Athene and Medusa: A Woman's Myth," *Anima* 2 (1980): 118–24; John Hayman, "Ruskin's *The Queen of the Air* and the Appeal of Mythology," *Philological Quarterly* 57 (1978): 104–14; Robert Hewison, *John Ruskin: The Argument of the Eye* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1976); Frederick Kirchhoff, "A Note on Ruskin's Mythography," *Victorian Newsletter* no. 50 (1976): 24–27; James Kissane, "Victorian Mythology," *Victorian Studies* 6 (1962): 5–28; George P. Landow, *The Aesthetic and Critical Theories of John Ruskin* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1971); and John D. Rosenberg, *The Darkening Glass: A Portrait of Ruskin's Genius* (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1961).

[11] While for Modernists like T. S. Eliot myth supplies "a method of ordering . . . the immense panorama of futility and anarchy which is contemporary history" (qtd. in Feder, p. 26), in Ruskin's hands it provides an opportunity for fruitful and generative disorder, despite Ruskin's own discomfort with chaos.

gave women the power of "sweet ordering" and critical judgment, but he entirely reserved artistic, creative power for men (see *Works*, XVIII, 121–22). Just a year later in *The Ethics of the Dust* Ruskin invested the Egyptian goddess Neith with architectonic power, making feminine the task of designing and assembling great pyramids, cathedrals, and crystals.[15] Still, he specifically denied her the power to create men from clay, reserving such ultimately creative force for the male deity Pthah. In the later *The Queen of the Air*, however, Ruskin explicitly made formative or creative power feminine and attributed it to Neith's Greek incarnation, Athena—reversing in mythology what he had decreed in social criticism.[16]

The Queen of the Air argues that, for the Greeks, Athena controls and incarnates air, wind, and even oxygen. For most mythographers, Uranus, Zeus, and Apollo represent aspects of the sky, Gaia, Demeter, and Persephone of the earth. By making Athena goddess of the air, Ruskin upsets traditional masculine/feminine dichotomy between deities of the air and earth. He further confuses that gender distinction by demonstrating how as queen of the air Athena nevertheless contains earthly elements, despite the customary opposition between earth and air. For example, Ruskin translates the book's second lecture title, "Athena Keramitis," as "Athena, fit for being made into pottery," and he subtitles it "Athena in the Earth" (*Works*, XIX, 351). Tradition characterizes the female figure as an earthen vessel, but Ruskin also implies that to an extent Athena herself is the earth's pot-

[15] Remarkably little criticism has appeared on *The Ethics of the Dust*, which, although never popular, was one of Ruskin's own favorites. A series of socratic dialogues between an old lecturer and a group of schoolgirls, the book discusses crystallography, ethics, mythology, and a variety of other topics. Among the few critics to discuss the text are Emerson; Raymond E. Fitch, *The Poison Sky: Myth and Apocalypse in Ruskin* (Athens, Ohio: Univ. Press, 1982); Sawyer; Susan A. Walsh, "Darling Mothers, Devilish Queens: The Divided Woman in Victorian Fantasy," *The Victorian Newsletter*, no. 72 (1987), 32–36; Birch, "*The Ethics of the Dust*: Ruskin's Authorities"; and Weltman.

[16] Ruskin makes his most powerful female figures goddesses rather than human beings because he is both attracted to and repelled by images of powerful women. Endowing historical women with supernatural strength terrifies the finally patriarchal Ruskin; myth offers a seemingly safe alternative. However, the potency of Ruskin's mythopoetic prose turns this closeted female power into a source of greater danger. Athena's strength as the queen of the air reflects back even on the Manchester housewives from "Of Queens' Gardens," imbuing them with her power.

ter, as would befit the Greek incarnation of the Egyptian goddess Neith, creator of pyramids and crystals. While in Ruskin's mineralogy textbook for girls, *The Ethics of the Dust*, Neith clearly indicates her brother Pthah as the potter (see *Works*, XVIII, 227), here in *The Queen of the Air* Athena assumes that role, usurping not only Pthah's function but also an aspect of the Christian trinity, casting clay forms and breathing life into them. Ruskin writes quite directly of "the power of Athena in giving life," of "this word 'spirit,'" that is "the power which shaped you into your shape, and by which you love, and hate, when you have received that shape" (*Works*, XIX, 351). Ruskin makes the even more startling statement that Athena is the Holy Ghost. He endeavors to prove

> the analogy between the spiritual power of Athena in her gentle ministry, yet irresistible anger, with the ministry of another Spirit whom we also, believing in as the universal power of life, are forbidden, at our worst peril, to quench or to grieve.
>
> (*Works*, XIX, 346)

Many critics point to this passage as an example of Ruskin's radically pagan revision of Christianity.[17] It is also radical in terms of gender. By making the analogy between an attribute of the male Christian godhead (traditionally the actual impregnator of Mary) and the female Athena, Ruskin invests her with God's authority, reinventing the Christian spirit in female form.[18]

Ruskin repeatedly stresses Athena's "Formative and Decisive power" (*Works*, XIX, 354) to shape and structure:

> This force, now properly called life, or breathing, or spirit, is continually creating its own shells of definite shape out of the wreck around it ... the power that catches out of chaos charcoal, water, lime, or what not, and fastens them down into a given form, is properly called 'spirit.' (*Works*, XIX, 356–57)

[17] Fitch, Sawyer, and Birch (*Ruskin's Myths*) all deal with this issue.

[18] As Dellamora demonstrates (pp. 53–54), Gerard Manley Hopkins creates another Victorian conception of an androgynous Holy Ghost in "God's Grandeur," with an even more complex and highly charged notion of gender and sexuality generated in the poem by Hopkins's sincere belief in Christianity. By contrast, Ruskin's invocation of the doctrine seems rhetorically motivated, permitting him at this point in his essay a simpler binary opposition to exploit.

To understand how radically Ruskin has revised Athena by giving her all formative power, we must remember that for the Greeks formative power is inherently, specifically masculine; in *Generation of Animals* Aristotle says that women contribute only the material, men the form, in procreation. "For this power [the semen] is that which acts and makes, while that which is made and receives the form is the residue of the secretion in the female."[19] In addition, Aristotle asserts that men are the efficient cause of the new child, women the material cause; women are "mutilated" men (I, 1,144, 1,211) analogous to eunuchs (I, 1,184, 1,211), monstrosities (I, 1,187), and children (I, 1,211).[20]

Ruskin goes on to invoke the chain of being (to which we will return shortly) that ties us to all other creatures. He elaborates this idea more fully in *The Ethics of the Dust*, but in *The Queen of the Air* Athena's formative spirit is the link: "we shall not diminish, but strengthen our conception of this creative energy by recognizing its presence in lower states of matter than our own" (*Works*, XIX, 357). Neith's crystallizing, architectonic power—which first identifies, separates, and categorizes each element and then draws like molecules to like, building crystals and pyramids—is the same power that breathes life, feeling, intention, and will into humankind. Ruskin now names that force Athena. The miracle of this formative spirit for Ruskin lies not only in its structuring and life-giving but also in its syncretic and ultimately linguistic function. Athena's power to animate the inanimate yokes us to "lower states of matter" in a vast construct of signification.

Although Ruskin reverently ascribes enormous formative power to Athena, the goddess has a dual nature

[19] Aristotle, *Generation of Animals*, trans. A. Platt, in *The Complete Works of Aristotle: The Revised Oxford Translation*, ed. Jonathan Barnes, 2 vols. (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1984), I, 1,132.

[20] Aristotle also says that men are active, women passive (I, 1,132); the male is hot, the female cold (I, 1,18[illegible]). For a ground-breaking feminist theoretical investigation of Aristotle, see Luce Irigaray, *Speculum of the Other Woman*, trans. Gillian C. Gill (Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press, 1985), pp. 160–67.

If she makes feminine the positive force that structures by connection, she also makes feminine the negative force that loosens the bonds of form and allows one thing to melt into another. Ruskin already hinted at this in *The Ethics of the Dust* and "Of Queens' Gardens,"[21] but in *The Queen of the Air* he makes clear that Athena absorbs the destructive capacity of Medusa as part of a pattern in which gods and heroes always assume the potency of their conquered foes. Ruskin explains that like Apollo and Python, like Hercules and the Nemean Lion, Athena wears the badge of her enemy, the Medusa.[22] But when she puts on her gorgon shield and serpent cloak, she dons also the evil force of earth that the snake incarnates.[23]

We have already seen that Athena comprises earth as well as air; Ruskin illustrates her duality in his well-known extended contrast between bird and serpent, the two animals most closely associated with Athena in *The Queen of the Air*. The seemingly antithetical snake and bird stand at the opposite extremes of an earth-air continuum: "the serpent, in which the breath or spirit,

[21] Indeed, Auerbach's interpretation of Woman's demonic power in "Of Queens' Gardens" depends upon it (see *Woman and the Demon*, pp. 58–61).

[22] Ruskin's use of the Medusa raises psychoanalytic questions beyond the scope of this argument. Begin with Sigmund Freud, "Medusa's Head" (1940), in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, ed. and trans. James Strachey, 24 vols. (London: Hogarth Press, 1953–74), XVIII, 273–74. For some important feminist theoretical uses of Freud's "Medusa's Head" note on phallic women, see Cixous; Jane Gallop's chapter on phallic mothers in her *The Daughter's Seduction: Feminism and Psychoanalysis* (Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press, 1982), pp. 113–31; Julia Kristeva, "Oscillation between Power and Denial," trans. Marilyn A. August, in *New French Feminisms: An Anthology*, ed. Elaine Marks and Isabelle de Courtivron (New York: Schocken Books, 1981), pp. 165–67; and Catherine Gallagher's piece (pp. 55–57) in Gallagher, Joel Fineman and Neil Hertz, "More about 'Medusa's Head,'" *Representations* 4 (1983): 55–72. For applications to Ruskin, consider Dellamora's chapters on both Ruskin and Pater (pp. 117–40) and Sawyer's "Ruskin and the Matriarchal Logos." For purely biographical speculation, see Phyllis Rose, *Parallel Lives: Five Victorian Marriages* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1983), p. 287.

[23] Ruskin discusses neither Medusa's rape by Poseidon nor her subsequent punishment by Athena, both significant omissions. He also ignores stories of Medusa's original beauty. In *Dancing with Goddesses: Archetypes, Poetry, and Empowerment* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana Univ. Press, 1994), Annis Pratt provides a highly readable history of Medusa and related snake goddesses in Greek and other cultures (see pp. 3–41). She points out that mythologists note many identifications of Athena with Medusa; she mentions as well that "medusa" itself means "queen," redoubling the connection between these supposedly opposed figures.

is less than in any other creature, and the earth-power greatest —the bird, in which the breath, or spirit, is more full than in any other creature, and the earth-power least" (*Works*, XIX, 360) For Ruskin, the bird symbolizes Athena's formative power, while the snake (the bird's—and so Athena's—ostensible opposite) represents the powers of degeneration and dissolution that the goddess has inherited from Medusa

Ruskin describes the bird as "a drift of the air brought into form by plumes, [it] glows with air in its flying, like a blown flame it rests upon the air, subdues it, surpasses it, outraces it,—*is* the air" (*Works*, XIX, 360) Even in these images shimmering with light and air, Ruskin has already compromised the glorious good of the bird with vestiges of serpenthood Although Athena creates the bird by weaving together actual bits of herself, bits that are all air ("the rubies of the clouds, that are not the price of Athena, but *are* Athena" [*Works*, XIX, 361]), the bird bears sinister signs of shadow and flame and a bright red crest, like the serpent in Eden and the singing tree-snakes in *The Ethics of the Dust* Ruskin's discussion of the bird as Athena's icon is surprisingly brief, while the most immediately obvious thing about Ruskin's earthbound serpent is how much of his prose it occupies in this book about Athena as goddess of the air, its description goes on for at least three times as long as the bird's (but then, Ruskin is of the snake's party without knowing it)

Ruskin describes the snake as a "living hieroglyph" permanently signifying something beyond itself

> The serpent crest on the pillars of Egypt, is a mystery, but the serpent itself, gliding past the pillar's foot, is it less a mystery? Is there, indeed, no tongue except the mute forked flash from its lips, in that running brook of horror on the ground? But that horror is of the myth, not of the creature There are myriads lower than this, and more loathsome, in the scale of being
> (*Works*, XIX, 361–62)

Snakes disturb us not because of horrific qualities in the reptiles themselves but because of what they represent In addition to denoting evil, the hieroglyphic serpents (along with any other hieroglyphs in Ruskin's linguistic scheme) demonstrate Athena's already established syncretic power Athena's connective force

not only "links . . . dead matter and animation" along the chain of being but also yokes "the very omnipotence of the earth" to the queen of the air herself (*Works*, XIX, 362), so that snakes simultaneously symbolize both Athena's Medusan characteristics and the link between symbol and the concept symbolized. Athena joins the signifying snake or bird to its ineluctable signified in the mysterious "tongue" that the snake illustrates, beyond the visible "mute forked flash" (*Works*, XIX, 362) that prompts our fear.

In case one has never happened to feel the revulsion from snakes that Ruskin assumes, he endeavors to evoke it:

> That rivulet of smooth silver—how does it flow, think you? . . . one soundless, causeless march of sequent rings, . . . with dissolution in its fangs, dislocation in its coils. Startle it,—the winding stream will become a twisted arrow,—the wave of poisoned life will lash through the grass like a cast lance. It scarcely breathes with its one lung (the other shrivelled and abortive). . . . It is a divine hieroglyph of the demoniac power of the earth. . . . As the bird is the clothed power of the air, so this is the clothed power of the dust; as the bird is the symbol of the spirit of life, so this of the grasp and sting of death. . . . (*Works*, XIX, 362–63)

Despite the Carlylean metaphor of "the clothed power of the air" and "earth," it is the sheer impossibility of the creature as Ruskin conjures it rather than its natural supernaturalism that astonishes him. Beyond nature, the snake becomes mythic: physics and anatomy cannot dismiss generations of superstition; the serpent's strangeness can only be accounted for by evil. Ruskin highlights this unnaturalness in his comment about the snake's "one lung (the other shrivelled and abortive)." The parenthetical format emphasizes the abortive and shriveled character of the lung, and so of the whole beast. In the one-lunged snake "the breath, or spirit, is less than in any other creature"—literally.

Opposed to the formative spirit of the air, the serpent represents the essence of destruction. It taints everything it touches, including the flowers in Ruskin's strange botanical digression. Normally Demeter or Persephone reigns over flowers, which Ruskin associates with girls, but because these blooms are corrupted by serpentine influence they fall into Athena's domain. Deflowered by "serpent nature" and "serpent charm" (*Works*,

XIX, 372, 377), the blossoms earn a new name, "*Draconidae*." Chief among them are the foxglove and snapdragon, which, Ruskin says,

> decorate themselves by spots, and swollen places in their leaves, as if they had been touched by poison. Then the spirit of these Draconidae never once [affects] the roses, but it enters like an evil spirit into the buttercup, and turns it into a larkspur, with a strange, broken blue, glittering on the surface as if it were strewn with broken glass. (*Works*, XIX, 376–77)

In some cases, the serpent spirit blatantly subverts the original flower, even entirely innocuous blooms—not only harmless, but pretty—like snapdragons and gladiola, which turn out to be corrupted roses. This process of perversion is an ongoing metamorphosis, a degeneration or devolution forever in the present tense. The effect of such immediacy is to throw all of the categories that Ruskin establishes here instantly into question.

While the changes he sees in flowers pain Ruskin, the serpent influence also corrupts the human race, whose imperfect evolutionary fate presents Ruskin with a greater sense of horror. He sees

> a disease, plague, or cretinous imperfection of development [in] the races of men, more full of mystery than the serpent-being itself as if the race itself were still half-serpent, not extricated yet from its clay, a lacertine breed of bitterness—the glory of it emaciate with cruel hunger, and blotted with venomous stain; and the track of it, on the leaf a glittering slime, and in the sand a useless furrow. (*Works*, XIX, 365)

He may say "half-serpent," but it sounds like more than half here. Whatever healing Aesculapian powers Ruskin may assign to earth or Athena or the serpent subdued, the serpent's evil seems to win after all. The word choice of "still half-serpent, not extricated yet" implies a kind of evolutionary hope, but the language represents overwhelmingly the bleakness of our serpent state. For Ruskin, to be half-serpent is to be damned; for man or goddess, any hint of evil overwhelms the good.

The sexuality of the viper that Ruskin describes seems undeniable: it horrifies and fascinates, it attracts and repels.

Marc Simpson has pointed out Ruskin's obsession with snakes, including dreams of serpents recorded in his diary along with entries alluding to masturbation.[24] A phallic symbol, the serpent becomes feminine for Ruskin in *The Ethics of the Dust*,[25] by hypothetically transforming little Florrie into a serpent and identifying all of the girls in the book with glowworms or fireflies, Ruskin merges in that image of flying worm both of Athena's familiars, bird and snake.[26] In fact, in *The Ethics of the Dust* the serpents live in trees and sing like sirens (another ambivalent image of feminine power), reinforcing their identification with birds and linking them to the serpent in Eden, who brought evil into the world (see *Works*, XVIII, 213–14). Ruskin also emphasizes the serpent's sinuous curves and feminine beauty. He associates it with the Egyptian goddess Neith, who wears on her helmet an asp (which rises whenever she exercises her power) and who carries as her scepter a "flaming arrow," prefiguring the twisted arrow that describes the startled snake above (*Works*, XVIII, 228). In *The Queen of the Air* Ruskin links the serpent with Athena, Medusa, Demeter, Proserpina, and even with his girlish flowers, which act as both rose and worm. However, the snake's importance for Ruskin rests in its ability not only to transcend gender but also to represent another stereotypically feminine principle, that of change and metamorphosis. Just as flowers devolve and

[24] See "The Dream of the Dragon: Ruskin's Serpent Imagery," in *The Ruskin Polygon: Essays on the Imagination of John Ruskin*, ed. John Dixon Hunt and Faith M. Holland (Manchester: Manchester Univ. Press, 1982), p. 35.

[25] Ruskin continues a long and rich tradition of viewing the serpent and serpentine as feminine, from ancient Sumerian snake-goddesses through the ringlets of Milton's Eve to Ken Russell's 1988 cult movie adaptation of Bram Stoker's *Lair of the White Worm* (1911). A few of the many other nineteenth-century British examples of associating women with serpents include Coleridge's *Christabel* (1800), the mother in Barrett Browning's *Aurora Leigh* (1856), and Gwendolen Harleth in George Eliot's *Daniel Deronda* (1876). As Dellamora points out (p. 119), Ruskin also shared an interest in serpent women with writers and artists connected to the Pre-Raphaelite movement such as Swinburne, D. G. Rossetti, Simeon Solomon, and even Hopkins. With the exception of the Sumerian example (since we have too little access to their culture to make any meaningful assessment), these instances rely on the sense of aberration that phallic snake-women produce in order to achieve their aesthetic effect. Ruskin appears to recognize the literary tradition by mentioning Keats's *Lamia* (which draws on the medieval Burton, who in turn reports the Greek legend).

[26] In "Ruskin's Fireflies," in *The Ruskin Polygon*, pp. 198–235, William Arrowsmith traces out the demonic significance of fireflies throughout Ruskin's work.

metamorphose under serpentine influence, so, Ruskin reminds us, other creatures change as well.

We have seen how the snake's degenerative power affects flowers, human nature, and little girls. Clearly all species—even the concept of species—are at risk, yet Ruskin does not give up on their permanence. For Ruskin, the origin of species matters less than what those species mean or represent to humankind. He first acknowledges the accuracy of evolutionary theory: "The facts on which I am about to dwell are in nowise antagonistic to the theories which Mr. Darwin's unwearied and unerring investigations are every day rendering more probable", but, he continues, "The æsthetic relations of species are independent of their origin" (*Works*, XIX, 358n). By shifting the species' significance from origin to aesthetic or moral meaning, Ruskin has it both ways. He remains respectably scientific while promoting a system of Platonic ideals. He goes on:

> the crocodile and the lamb may have descended from the same ancestral atom of protoplasm, and . . . the operation of calcareous slime and of meadow grass, on that protoplasm, may in time have developed the opposite natures and aspects of the living frames; but the practically important fact for us is the existence of a power which creates that calcareous earth itself . . . the calcareous earth, soft, may beget crocodiles, and dry and hard, sheep; and . . . the aspects and qualities of these two products, crocodiles and lambs may be, the one repellent to the spirit of man, the other attractive to it, in a quite inevitable way, representing to him states of moral evil and good, and becoming myths to him of destruction or redemption, and, in the most literal sense, "Words" of God.
> (*Works*, XIX, 359)

No matter that Darwin was right about evolution, what interests Ruskin is not how species came about or how blurred or nonexistent their original boundaries were, but, instead, what their current, distinct, linguistic boundaries are in "relation to man" (*Works*, XIX, 358)—even though he also understands that species and boundaries are still in flux.

In other words, regardless of the random mechanism by which evolution occurs, the important fact for Ruskin is that creatures develop into objects that represent, that a syncretic force gathers matter into signifying structures. We already know that force to be Athena. Her authority as "formative spirit" creates and orders the calcareous earth as well as separates species that only seem to pass into one another. She both creates static, signifying beasts and dissolves perfect animal forms through evolution.

> The bird through the penguin drops towards the fish, and the fish in the cetacean reascends to the mammal, yet there is no confusion of thought possible between the perfect forms of an eagle, a trout, and a war-horse, in their relations to the elements, and to man. (*Works*, XIX, 360)

As with the Draconian flowers, here Ruskin invokes evolution in the present tense, seeing a metamorphic, synchronic relationship between current species rather than the diachronic relationship of descent from common ancestors that determines the present situation. He does this at the very moment of insisting on the species' eternal, unchanging form, underscoring Athena's simultaneous powers of formation and dissolution as well as the ultimate mutability of supposedly eternal, unchanging hieroglyphs.

It should not surprise us that Ruskin identifies the shape-changing metamorphic power of the snake with the feminine, even when he also represents as feminine the shape-making, formative powers established above. Indeed, the Medusa herself both crystallizes objects, in that she changes whoever looks upon her into stone,[27] and dissolves them, as a female incarnation of the skin-shedding, death-dealing serpent. In "Of Queens' Gardens" Ruskin inverts the meaning of Verdi's aria "La donna è mobile" (woman is fickle) in order to flatter his listeners prettily

In addition to the phallic snakes that adorn her, Medusa's ability to crystallize or to harden things identifies her with the traditionally masculine. It also makes Ruskin's use of the formative or crystallizing power as an attribute of femininity so interesting. For an analysis of the Medusa as a hybrid of masculine and feminine, and of the masculine Athena somewhat feminized by her inclusion of the maternal Medusa, see Warner, pp. 103–32.

about their greatly adaptable capacity for helping others: his garden Queen "must be . . . wise . . . with the passionate gentleness of an infinitely variable, because infinitely applicable, modesty of service—the true changefulness of woman" (*Works*, XVIII, 123). But for Ruskin, woman's supposed changeableness has more important implications than either philanthropy or the stereotypically fickle treatment of beaux. Woman is not just changeable, she incarnates the principle of change. Individual, real-life women represent deadly metamorphic dissolution for Ruskin as surely as they symbolize sweet order, connection, and life. Ruskin particularly admired Keats's poem *Lamia* (see Simpson, pp. 22–23); the lamia myth—of snake turned woman turned snake again, with fatal consequences for the man who loved her—stands as an emblem of Ruskin's fear and fascination with the protean force that Athena controls and that, for him, women embody.[28]

While for linguistic mythographer Max Muller language may be something like the key to all mythologies, for Ruskin myth provides the key to all languages, at least to the interpretation of living hieroglyphs.[29] It is not so far-fetched to claim that a thing's materiality expresses its essence. But in Ruskin's case a language of objects provides unmediated representation, a tangible—in the case of the snake, even a visceral—connection to what it signifies. Ruskin specifies that each example in his hieroglyphic code (in which both snakes and

[28] Ruskin's dreams of snakes with womanly breasts that slide into his room or latch onto his neck and suck leachlike are among many examples revealing his anxiety about phallic women. See Rose La Touche, *John Ruskin and Rose La Touche: Her Unpublished Diaries of 1861 and 1867*, ed. Van Akin Burd (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979), p. 119.

[29] In the 1860s England's premier mythographer Max Muller's philological method and explanation of all myth as solar in origin seemed to do what George Eliot's Casaubon hoped to do: to provide the key to all mythologies. Like all of Europe, Ruskin took Muller seriously, strongly recommending Muller's books to readers of "Of Kings' Treasuries" (see *Works*, XVIII, 69). For what remains the best summary of Muller's rise and fall, see Richard M. Dorson, "The Eclipse of Solar Mythology," in *Myth: A Symposium*, ed. Thomas A. Sebeok (Bloomington: Indiana Univ. Press, 1958), pp. 15–38.

birds are living words of God, or rather, of the goddess) is "wholly under the rule of Athena" (*Works*, XIX, 345). This makes signification itself feminine, not merely because Ruskin associates Athena with the serpent as a living hieroglyph but also and more importantly because Athena's formative power weaves the linguistic connection between every hieroglyphic signifier and its inevitable, eternal signified.[30] By governing signification, Athena replaces Christianity's Logos as well as the Holy Spirit. Sawyer has pointed out in "Ruskin and the Matriarchal Logos" that Athena becomes the Law, "Logos as present, full, and female" (p. 140). As Logos, Athena does not just rule the "'Words' of God," she is the Word itself.

The goddess also governs language in another way. The author of that force that gives form and shape and breath and inspiration to living words (like crocodiles and sheep) also does so to ordinary spoken ones, which Ruskin reminds us are vibrations of air. He theorizes that for the Greeks, Athena literally *is* the air: we breathe her, we send her oxygen to our brains, we aerate and fertilize the earth with her. She blows wind into our sails, she feeds lamplight, she punishes justly as harpies and whirlwinds. Ruskin explains that Athena is also "the air conveying vibration of sound" (*Works*, XIX, 328), that is, her physical existence provides the medium through which sound travels. Although air is also the medium of speech, the basis of verbal communication,[31] Ruskin concentrates primarily on how the air's vibration or sound waves produce music. Ruskin associates

[30] For discussion of how Ruskin feminizes metaphor (and implicitly language) through a discussion of Neith's styptic power in *The Ethics of the Dust*, see Weltman. For more general feminist explorations of metaphor theory, see Margaret Homans, "Syllables of Velvet: Dickinson, Rossetti, and the Rhetorics of Sexuality," *Feminist Studies* 11 (1985): 569–93; Domna C. Stanton, "Difference on Trial: A Critique of the Maternal Metaphor in Cixous, Irigaray, and Kristeva," in *The Poetics of Gender*, ed. Nancy K. Miller (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1986), pp. 157–82; and Susan Stanford Friedman, "Creativity and the Childbirth Metaphor: Gender Difference in Literary Discourse," *Feminist Studies* 13 (1987): 49–82.

[31] Speech obviously is not and never has been the same thing as language, as Derrida has told us and as anyone familiar with sign language already knows. But we in the twentieth century would not need to deconstruct the speech/writing binary if our predecessors like Ruskin did not operate within a model of language as based on or even identical to speech, from which they departed into metaphors for other kinds of language like Nature or myth.

the inspired sound of the flute with Athena, but he carefully tries to protect his virgin goddess from the carnal passion of Pan's pipe by having Athena invent it first. She gets the idea for the flute, he says, "from hearing the hiss of the Gorgonian serpents" (*Works*, XIX, 343), then she makes "Pan's pipe out of Medusa's hair" (*Works*, XIX, 343n), doubling her connection to the gorgon as well as reinforcing the link between serpentine metamorphosis and oral expression.

Ruskin notes that Athena's

> name, Pallas, probably refers to the quivering or vibration of the air, and to its power, whether as vital force, or communicated wave, over every kind of matter, in giving it vibratory movement; first, and most intense, in the voice and throat of the bird, which is the air incarnate, and so descending through the various orders of animal life to the vibrating and semi-voluntary murmur of the insect, and, lower still, to the hiss, or quiver of the tail, of the half-lunged snake and deaf adder; all these, nevertheless, being wholly under the rule of Athena as representing either breath, or vital nervous power. (*Works*, XIX, 345)

The sound wave, in the form of a perfectly serpentine sine (or sign) wave, carries speech as well as music. Under Athena's rule even language becomes a great serpent, vibrating through air. It is no accident for Ruskin that the serpent wriggles in a "living wave," as he calls it in *Deucalion*.[32] When it moves, the snake manifests in reptilian flesh the incorporated vibration that makes spoken communication possible.[33]

The wave that Ruskin creates in Athena's oscillation between the two orders of animal—snake and bird—is a type for metaphor, a basic element of language that forges an identity

[32] *Deucalion, and Other Studies in Rocks and Stones* (1875–83) is a geological analysis of glacial movement. The first chapter of Volume II comprises a digression on serpents arguing, partly in fun, an evolutionary connection between birds and snakes (see *Works* XXVI, 295–332).

[33] In *Biographia Literaria* (1817) Samuel Taylor Coleridge notes the Egyptian serpent as symbol of wisdom, Athena's usual domain. He also links the serpent both to the sine wave that sound makes when traveling through air and to the working of poetic language. See *Biographia Literaria, or Biographical Sketches of My Literary Life and Opinions*, ed. James Engell and W. Jackson Bate, 2 vols., vols. 7 and 8 of *The Collected Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1983), II, 14.

·en two unlike things but does not allow them to resolve each other.[34] The deaf adder is as unnatural as the half-d snake because, since the adder cannot hear, it fails pre- in its proper realm of vibration or sound. Once more the pirit is diminished: snakes represent the wave that consti- speech, yet the adder cannot even discern its own hiss. Ruskin offers the metaphor of devolution, sliding down volutionary scale of being from bird to reptile to insect, metamorphosing into the other, undercutting any notion unmediated significance for these living hieroglyphs.[35] rtheless, as with the crocodile and the lamb, or the eagle he trout, any resemblance Ruskin shows us among these ures bears more on their relationship to Athena's vibratory over signification than on their relationship to a com- ancestor.

use the word oscillation to describe what Murray Krieger calls "the interplay be- enor and vehicle. . . . As our focus alternates from one to the other and back again unction between them is not bridged" (*A Reopening of Closure: Organicism Against* ew York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1989], p. 25). Patricia Parker in *Literary Fat Ladies: Gender, Property* (London: Methuen, 1987) also discusses the transgressive aspect aphor as "transport . . . which is both exile and return" (p. 44). For related discus metaphor, see Paul de Man, "The Epistemology of Metaphor," in *On Metaphor*, ldon Sacks (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1978), pp. 11–28; Robert Frost, *Po- l Prose*, ed. Edward Connery Lathem and Lawrance Thompson (New York: Holt, rt and Winston, 1972); J. Hillis Miller, "Catachresis, Prosopopoeia, and the Pa allacy: The Rhetoric of Ruskin," in *Poetry and Epistemology: Turning Points in the of Poetic Knowledge*, ed. Roland Hagenbüchle and Laura Skandera (Regensburg h Pustet, 1986), pp. 398–407; and Paul Ricoeur, *The Rule of Metaphor: Multi nary Studies of the Creation of Meaning in Language*, trans. Robert Czerny (Toronto f Toronto Press, 1977).

according to William Keach in *Shelley's Style* (London: Methuen, 1984), hiero liffer from other metaphors in that they operate on a more direct plane. Unlike inds of linguistic signs they are fundamentally representational images (p. 19). not an unproblematic statement; for example, it does not take into account the l training required to recognize obviously representational art, as that which it on the routine use of hieroglyphs in rebuses to designate words or phonemes entirely arbitrary signs. Nevertheless, Keach's point about Shelley is very inter n relation to Ruskin's use of hieroglyphs because it recalls the French feminist ion of the Lacanian Imaginary, that pre-Oedipal and pre-linguistic place in the which *l'écriture féminine* has recourse in its disruptive project. In an escape from mbolic realm, which is implicated in phallogocentric structures, writers like and Irigaray turn to the Imaginary with its seemingly less mediated, less arbitrary. Within this framework Ruskin's choice of hieroglyphics for his privileged lin code reinforces the notion that for him language is feminine. See Irigaray, *Specu he Other Woman*.

The oscillating wave stands for another strict distinction that Ruskin establishes repeatedly only to blur again and again—gender. We have seen that when he defines Athena's power in relation to the other gods and goddesses, he continually qualifies his divisions in Athena's favor. Ruskin goes beyond adding new powers to Athena's repertoire: he takes typically masculine symbols, like the snake, and joins an alternative tradition that makes them feminine. Nevertheless, his Athena absorbs masculine images without becoming blandly androgynous. Indeed, it is vital to his thinking about gender that forms remain distinct so that they can achieve "communion" (*Works*, XVIII, 238). When Ruskin confuses gender distinctions he does so to the peril of his own position, because without these differentiations, his basis for metaphor collapses; the two terms consume each other. Without oscillating motion between poles, the sine wave flattens into a straight line and sound stops. The feminine principle that Ruskin defines as Athena is ultimately impossible within the Victorian system of two complementary genders; it attaches so much of the ostensibly masculine as to render basic gender division vain.

Ruskin cannot avoid gender dichotomy, both because he does not want to and because it is so much a part of Victorian culture, but he moves away from it nonetheless. Hélène Cixous and others have already discovered mythic discourse to express something beyond the phallocentric, but they give voice to the suppressed feminine as they think it really exists, ready and waiting for expression within real women. However, from a poststructuralist perspective, the social constructedness of gender means that there is no inherent femininity to express; thus myth becomes useful for showing masculinity and femininity to be insubstantial, fantastic, protean magic. Through myth Ruskin inadvertently creates a mutable system of signification, where genders as well as signs become mobile rather than fixed.

Greek mythology is a repository for the shifting, unstable figures and vocabulary that not only provide English with words to describe the protean, the hermaphrodite, the androgyne, and the metamorphic but also offer archetypal examples of cross-

sxual function, like Zeus's birth of Athena or Tiresias's experi-
nce as a woman. Ruskin's mythopoesis inaugurates a wild lan-
uage made up of moving, growing, dying organic creatures like
he snake—whose function is to represent and who enacts the
lipperiness of language.[36] By associating hieroglyphics with
thena and the feminine, Ruskin subverts the traditionally
damic vision of language and reveals the mercurial quality of
oth meaning and gender. Ruskin never surrenders gender di-
ision; he maintains difference in order to unite what for him
nust always be separate, thereby catching him in his own criti-
al oscillations of blurring and distinguishing, distinguishing
nd blurring, forever. Yet in his mythic oscillations lies the po-
ntial for escape from fixed categories of gender, a thought
hat Ruskin never articulates but keeps always in suspension.

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[36] Ruskin's living signifiers do not just slip in Derridean fashion—they slither. Since
thena directs the linguistic pageant, Ruskin places her (in structuralist terms) outside
above the system in a seemingly metalinguistic position of authority. But because she
the ideal that real women represent, the goddess is just another actor in the play of
gnification.

Reviews

ADELA PINCH, *Strange Fits of Passion: Epistemologies of Emotion, Hume to Austen*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996. Pp. xii + 240. $37.50.

This insightful book might well have borne the subtitle "How to Do Things with Feelings." For when it comes to matters of emotion, Adela Pinch argues, epistemological statements are best understood as performative acts. In addressing an utterance such as "Strange fits of passion I have known," the critic need not put aside concerns about the authenticity, truth, ultimate origins, or individual temper of the feelings thus represented, but he or she should see these concerns as being inseparable from questions about the social implications of such an utterance within those contexts in which it appeared and was circulated. As Pinch summarizes her argument, "narratives about feeling's origins and effects are social stories" (p. 187). Accordingly, through a study that focuses especially on writings by David Hume, Charlotte Smith, William Wordsworth, Ann Radcliffe, Jane Austen, and Thomas De Quincey, Pinch seeks to analyze what English people talked about when they talked about feelings in the course of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. She concludes her study by considering the text of popular feeling that was woven by the English populace around Princess Charlotte's death in childbirth in 1817.

Pinch takes her starting point in the language through which people defined feeling or emotion for themselves. She focuses especially on those terms, such as "extravagance" and "contagion," through which feeling was articulated as an intensely personal concern that was at the same time an intersubjective problem of knowledge and government. But where her subjects might discuss a specific problem in interpreting feeling, Pinch does not address this problem as such. Instead, she asks what ends are served when a given person in particular historical circumstances is brought to imagine feeling in the form of a problem. More generally, she analyzes debates over the birth, nature and management of personal emotions as exercises in the constitu

tion, definition, and control of cultural identities, with special attention to the articulation of gender relations in and through these rhetorical doings. In this manner she retraces philosophical, critical, literary, and popular tropologies of feeling while resolutely keeping her distance from all their presumed gusts, thrills, and shudders. It seems that to do otherwise would be to identify with the very object in need of one's critical scrutiny: the language in which feeling appears as a compelling problem of knowledge. Moreover, any such identification would most likely be a *mis*identification, since Pinch is concerned to argue that critics following this more traditional approach have tended to underestimate the complexity with which the people of this era regarded themselves regarding their feelings.

Within this argument, it is not surprising to see Hume appear, in effect, as a forerunner of late-twentieth-century theoreticians of identity. Nonetheless, the chapter here on "The Philosopher as Man of Feeling" is an excellent one. Through the way Hume represents the passions, Pinch contends, the persons of human society are suggested to be personifications cobbled together at the dangerous crossroads of intersubjectivity where disparate feelings chance to run into one another. In other words, with Hume as with the other figures that Pinch goes on to examine, forms of feeling commonly considered secondary to its true nature—public, conventional, manipulated, or literary forms—are recognized, paradoxically, as the mediums through which the very distinctions between "original" and "imitative," "personal" and "social," or "primary" and "secondary" are negotiated in the first place. "Not only is our sense of self constituted [according to Hume] through having feelings of pride inspired by contingent objects, but the feelings we have about ourselves may be largely versions of other people's feelings about us" (p. 25). Charlotte Smith then appears as a sentimental poet whose writings challenge the very notion of sentimental authenticity, Wordsworth as a man who discovered his own feelings by investing himself in a poetry "predicated on women's suffering" (p. 75), the formulaic Radcliffe as a psychologist no less perspicuous than Nicolas Abraham and Maria Torok, Austen as a slyboots who pays tribute to the term "sympathy" even as she suggests that it might ultimately be synonymous with "persuasion", De Quincey as more profoundly a quotation addict than an opium eater, and the seemingly spontaneous popular reaction to Princess Charlotte's death as an elaborately codified and conflicted ceremonial of national, class, and gender identities. The topics addressed by Pinch in the course of these analyses, often to fascinating effect, include the epistemology of empiricism, the concept of plagiarism, the poetic trope of personification, the cultural func-

tions of reading, the gender politics of generic definitions and literary history, and the interrelationship of philosophical, literary, and vernacular theories of feeling.

Since this book must seem to take its bearings from a broad range of contemporary theory in which Foucauldian, New Historicist, Derridean, and feminist concerns are especially notable, the special emphasis it occasionally places on psychoanalytic models does seem somewhat odd. When Pinch invokes one of Freud's essays, "A Child Is Being Beaten," "to show how it is constructed *like* a romantic text" (p. 94), or when she asserts, "my point here is not to offer Abraham and Torok's theory as an explanation of the gothic but to note the similarities between its stories and the gothic's" (p. 133), she herself seems almost to concede that the comparisons she is making do not seem particularly pertinent to her argument (or, one might add, particularly new). On the other hand, when she occasionally ventures to remark upon the significance of her study to current feminist concerns, her comments are more canny: "While we may be tempted, as eighteenth-century culture often was, to solve the problems of extravagant emotions—where they come from, to whom they belong, what they mean historically—by calling feelings feminine, the gendering of feelings may make feelings harder to place, rather than giving them a clearer meaning. However, feminism may perhaps benefit from the sentimental demonstration that the etiological alterity of feeling is not sufficient to discredit feeling's force" (p. 71). These moments in which her personal investments in her argument are allowed to intrude upon her historicist perspective are actually in keeping with her emphasis throughout this study on feelings as communicative movements that call into question conventional distinctions between human beings and the cultural forms supposed to be outside, beyond, or other than them. In these fleeting moments we witness a subtle demonstration of one of the author's central paradoxes, that "feelings may be most powerful . . . when they are where they are not supposed to be" (p. 192).

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JONATHAN ELMER, *Reading at the Social Limit: Affect, Mass Culture, and Edgar Allan Poe*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1995. Pp. xii + 259. $35.

First things first: Elmer's post-structuralist reading of Edgar Allan Poe is one of the most scintillatingly intelligent, intel-

tually imaginative books to appear on Poe in years. More precisely tegorized, however, it is a book less comprehensively devoted to Poe r se than to Poe as a central figure in the formation of modern Amerin mass culture. As a sign of this phenomenon, Elmer notes in his ening paragraph, it is Poe whose face serves as an icon of the Hisical Products Company advertisement that runs periodically in the ges of the *New Yorker*. That observation both introduces and encapsues Elmer's discussion of Poe's paradigmatic position at the center of nerican mass culture as it developed in Poe's own time and—what esumably matters more to Elmer—as it has continued to evolve into r own.

The question that engages Elmer—what is a reader to make of lgar Allan Poe?—is one that has troubled readers and critics for genitions. Critics from Baudelaire and James to Valery and Bloom, not mention generations of less-specialized readers who made Poe's acaintance as summer campers, schoolchildren, and/or university stunts, have thrashed over that question repeatedly, often in multiple stations. The answer for Elmer to both that question and its accomnying issue of Poe's peculiarly uneven historical reception is that Poe emplifies the configurations, ideology, and psychology of mass cule, the culture that gave birth to him as he gave birth to several of its ost characteristic genres and gestures. The term is so vital to Elmer's inking that it deserves to be stated in his own words: mass culture him, is to be seen not as "one pole of a cultural differentiation but the very terrain of ongoing social mediations"; likewise, Poe's role in ing expression to it needs to be understood not as "anomalous but her as exemplary, both in his mix of high and low and his overt at ntion to the manipulation of effect" (p. 8). Why Elmer singles out Poe this regard and not, say, Melville, Stowe, or Whitman, is not an issue at he discusses at length explicitly, but the answer seems to be not only peculiarly divided, high/low reception that Poe has received over course of the last 150 years but also the insistently psychologized ture of his work, which appeals to Elmer's own attraction to psychoalytic theory as a primary resource for explaining personality forition in modern society.

Far from seeing Poe, as others have seen him, as a man marginald by and alienated from his time, place, and culture, Elmer sees him fully involved in and acutely conscious of the crucial developments his time: the proliferation of print culture, the growing split between igh" and "low" forms of expression, and the intensifying tension be-"en individuality and "social totality" brought about by the onrush democratization. In fact, Elmer demonstrates Poe's intellectual and ychological absorption in his milieu so powerfully and relentlessly

that I seriously doubt that readers of this book are likely to return to that commonly held position anytime soon. His portrayal of Poe is that of a brilliant, if obsessively troubled, participant/observer/fabulator of the inchoate psychic drama of mid-nineteenth-century mass humanity, a retelling and retooling of "the American Atom" seeking to define its self-identity through engagement with the amorphous void of what Elmer in his title calls "the social limit." Whether taking form as the man in the crowd, the man who was used up, the man who found himself twinned, the man who was about no longer to be a man (to cite generic titles or situations in Poe), that recurring psychodrama was one in which individuals pursued their personal sovereignty through the maze-like circuitry of post-traditional society only to discover that self and society are internalized reflections of each other, the one channeling into the other with no alternative outlet. The result is a crisis of self-representation and self-expression in the United States that Elmer believes spills over from the psychosocial realm into the cultural.

One of the interesting twists that Elmer gives to this line of thought is to connect it to recent historicizing and theorizing about the rise of mass print culture in Poe's time. Constructing a broad theoretical model for discussing intersections between print, representation, community, individuality, and self-expression in modern societies from the work of such critics and theorists as Benedict Anderson, Michael Warner, Homi Bhabha, and Jacques Derrida, Elmer understands Poe to be a writer for whom the new mass medium of antebellum print culture became the premier site for stating and formulating the unresolvable tensions between the post-traditional individual and the mass society in which he or she circulates. Poe not only did so obsessively in one story after another but did so in intricate figurations of characters who themselves repeat this fundamental pattern in acts of reading, writing, storytelling, encoding and uncoding, and language formation. Indeed, one of the strengths of Elmer's formulation and interpretation is that it identifies and attaches itself to many of the writing practices most fundamental to Poe's art and most connected to his psyche: repetition, inscription, narration, detection, revelation, confession, sensation, and enclosure. His readings of particular Poe works—among those that come to mind are "William Wilson," "The Man That Was Used Up," "The System of Doctor Tarr and Professor Fether," and "The Raven"—are as sophisticated and ingenious as any I know, and the overall pattern of the reading is so persuasive that one may well find oneself extending Elmer's readings to works treated only marginally here, as I found myself doing, for instance, with *The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym*.

This is as discerning a book about America as it is about Poe and mass culture, although its insights will not come easily to a reader unprepared to deal with Elmer's complicated, eclectic borrowings and post-structuralist language and practices. Nor will Elmer's Poe—a Poe to my mind, peculiarly of and for the 1990s—necessarily satisfy the expectations and preconceptions of historically minded readers, who may find Elmer's treatment of past ways and patterns thin and his methodological practices and assumptions alien to their own. Just the same, I believe that even for them the wrestle with this book is well worth the effort. My own appreciation of it deepened recently as I was reading through the latest issue of the *New Yorker* (which I, too, enjoy) and came upon an observation in Adam Gropnik's assessment of Frederick Law Olmsted's creation of Central Park that immediately drove me back to Elmer's Poe. Central Park, Gropnik notes, contains the loneliness and amorphousness of liberal democratic space. "In Central Park you are never alienated but you are often disoriented. The Park is never, quite, all yours." It is, he concludes, a place "where everybody goes to play and nobody leaves a footprint" (31 March 1997, pp. 102, 104). This is an insight about America's most public and private places that Elmer's Poe would have understood well.

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MICHAEL J. COLACURCIO, *Doctrine and Difference: Essays in the Literature of New England.* New York: Routledge, 1996. Pp. viii + 294. $65.

The assembling and reissuing of one's scholarly articles, a province of the distinguished critic only, is a chance to select, revise, take stock, measure changes in the academy, and issue defensive challenges to the profession. Never more so than here, as Colacurcio writes: "The essays in this volume all flow from the self-protecting wish to keep the academic world safe for the thing I seem to do best—to recover, if possible, and to publish, if permitted, the life and power of those philosophic and scriptural ideas which make the religious concerns of the past seem not entirely a matter of false consciousness. And, more specifically, to add my voice to the devoted but no longer fashionable chorus of those who think it would be pretty hard to overestimate the interest or the explanatory power of the ideology of the American Puritans" (p. 2). Although the scholarly tradition of Perry Miller

Alan Heimert, and Sacvan Bercovitch (which Colacurcio so ably continues) has hardly been at the height of fashion during the succeeding and cumulative waves of Structuralism, Deconstruction, Feminism, and Ethnicity, Colacurcio's apprehension that the displacing of the Puritan tradition in American literature might be imminent seems excessive. The present reign of "Cultural Studies," with or without its denigrators of hegemony, is certainly hospitable to the socio-religious concerns of writers as diverse as Cotton Mather, Margaret Fuller, and Henry Adams. As long as literary art and intellectual reach remain of value to the curricula of English Departments, it is hard to imagine lasting neglect of former- and latter-day "Puritan" or "Neo-Puritan" writers like Taylor, Edwards, Emerson, Hawthorne, Melville, Dickinson, and Robert Lowell. As the wheel of scholarly fashion continues to turn, will it not be necessary to return again and again (if we are to teach pre-1860 American literature at all) to the tradition that—by virtue of elite leadership, control of print media, and belief in the power of the written word—was so very dominant for so very long? Or is Colacurcio delivering a calculated scholarly jeremiad of his own here—exaggerating the symptoms of decline in order to release the energies needed to overcome them? If so, then given the high quality of this volume, the more such predictive woe, the better.

Because no collection of essays written over a thirty-year period can possess the coherence of a monograph, the reader and reviewer's best recourse is to choose among the highest-karat offerings and not to worry about the inevitable interstices. ("Why no essays on Cotton Mather, Thoreau, Mrs. Stowe, or Robinson in a volume with this title?"—etc.) "The Example of Edwards," originally written for Emory Elliott's *Puritan Influences in American Literature* (1979), is as lively and informative an introduction to Edwards for readers at any level as we are ever likely to have. Edwards is exactly situated in Western cultural history: "one of the last, perhaps *the* last arguably major Christian thinker to work within, or in sight of, the familiar problematic of Reason and Revelation, just prior to the powerful influence of the Higher Criticism" (p. 93). Fully aware that Edwards's very name arouses false stereotypes of a fundamentalist Calvin *redivivus*, Colacurcio offers us the significance of Edwardsian Idealism in terms hard to refuse: "If God is, properly speaking, the only true substance and the only truly efficient cause in the history of that lively process we call the universe, then why should anything but God be supposed to matter in the history of the process of salvation?" (p. 69). Shades of Pascal's wager, here; under the circumstances, who among us would choose to claim certainty that God does not exist? Colacurcio perceptively connects Edwards to later writers (Emerson, Poe, Newman, William James) as well as to earlier Chris-

philosophers, and he argues for Edwards's proto-Modern "Deconstruction" of the Self without ever forgetting, as all readers surely know, Edwards was fond of "utterly demolishing a position which no one held" (p. 79). This essay's new "coda," written in 1995, ends with unforgettably witty and telling paragraphs on teaching the first of the American Literature survey (pp. 107–8). All of us who struggled to identify Edwards, Emerson, Taylor, Edwards, and Cotton Mather in our students' blue books will relish them.

The revised "Footsteps of Anne Hutchinson: A Puritan Context for *The Scarlet Letter*" remains as freshly informative and convincing as when published in *ELH* in 1972. The Antinomian Controversy is less as a source, and certainly not as Hawthorne's subject, but as an explicit historical analogue through which Colacurcio then clarify differences between the rebellions of Anne Hutchinson and Hester Prynne and between the retreats into orthodoxy of Cotton and Arthur Dimmesdale. The resulting illuminations both ways. This carefully reasoned and startlingly original article, among its other merits, the first to reveal why Hawthorne's early sketch "Mrs. Hutchinson" is important to understanding *The Scarlet Letter*, makes recent debates about Old Historicism vs. New Historicism seem rather pointless in the face of what might more appropriately be called "Good Historicism." Bercovitch's *The Office of "The Scarlet Letter"* (1991) explores how contemporary public response to the Seneca Falls Convention informs Hawthorne's characterization of Hester's rebellion and return. Colacurcio's work on *The Scarlet Letter* (including an additional essay in this volume on the characterizations of Governors Bellingham and Winthrop) points backward to sources in Puritan doctrine and Congregational politics, but it is a tribute to both these critics, as well as to Hawthorne, that these different kinds of historical contextualizing are equally plausible, equally convincing.

Colacurcio is no less perceptive in writing about selected authors indirectly and obviously connected to the Puritan tradition. He approaches Emerson's "Divinity School Address" as a new form of Puritan sermon for Unitarian times, to be carefully distinguished from those of ... and not exactly in the form of "Text, Explication, Application," to be sure, but close enough to serve as a new kind of baptismal experience both for Emerson, the recently resigned Unitarian minister, and for commencing Harvard Divinity students. The volume's concluding essay, "Puritans in Spite," summarizes Emerson's, Hawthorne's, Melville's, and Dickinson's responses to continuing Puritan attitudes and tenets far too briefly to offer much that is truly new, but its controlling point is surely as incontestable as it is crucial. I want in the end to raise only a very simple question: Can we really imagine

Hawthorne's instructed but edgy evocations of earlier New England or Melville's preposterous but irrepressible quarrels with God, or Dickinson's finely turned little blasphemies could have been produced anywhere but in the latter days of a Puritanic culture? And even on the less 'gloomy' side, does not Emerson's passionate departure from cradle Unitarianism indicate a reversion to a familiar if recessive Puritan type as clearly as it does a perfection of the liberal progress?" (p. 231). Amen. Sketchy though Colacurcio's conclusion is, one should not assume that he is merely adumbrating positions taken long ago on these issues by Matthiessen, Miller, and Feidelson. What separates Colacurcio from them is his refusal to assume that, by the mid nineteenth century, corpse-cold Unitarian reason and liberal progress had replaced Calvinism as the mainstream, even in New England. A just-published anthology of seventeen scholarly essays titled *The Calvinist Roots of the Modern Era* (1997), edited by Aliki Barnstone, Michael Tomasek Manson, and Carol J. Singley, and concerned with authors from William Dean Howells to T. S. Eliot to Elizabeth Bishop, gives substance to Colacurcio's claim by extending the influence of Puritanic tradition much later and deeper than is conceived in the hoary boundaries of literary periodicity.

One has one's gripes, too. Colacurcio's habit of exploring the complexities of an intellectual aside at very great length can distract his reader, if not him, from the main point. In pursuit of preparationist and salvational concerns, the revised article titled "Christ's Reply, Saint's Assurance" still seems to ignore the fact that Edward Taylor was a poet, sometimes a great one. Why a rather inconclusive influence-study essay on Emerson and Herbert is included in this particular volume—aside from their common concern with priestly vocation—is hard to discern. And so forth. But these are minor cavils. Any Americanist who has not read Colacurcio's essays should do so; anyone who has read them will enjoy, and benefit from, this thoughtfully revised and effectively supplemented collection.

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WYN KELLEY, *Melville's City: Literary and Urban Form in Nineteenth-Century New York*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996. Pp. xiv + 312. $49.95.

The growing body of criticism on literature and the city is notably enriched by the publication of this book, which re-

considers Herman Melville's oeuvre in light of its relationship to urban expansion in nineteenth-century America. The tendency of much recent Melville criticism has been to challenge the old notion that Melville was profoundly alienated from American society and culture. The myth of Melville's alienation began in the 1920s when disaffected critics, reflecting the cynicism of the Lost Generation, saw him as a fellow naysayer whose dark works stood in opposition to a philistine culture of easy optimism. Then came the New Critics, for whom Melville was a titanic, isolated champion of irony and paradox, followed by the myth-and-symbol commentators, who claimed that Melville, "finding himself in an impoverished culture that offered few materials for great literature, spun imaginative romances that created a mythic 'world elsewhere.'" For deconstructionists Melville was a novelist of aporia and indeterminacy whose linguistic slippages distanced him from the simpler styles of his contemporaries.

Although current critics do not deny the mythic, indeterminate nature of much of Melville's work, they seek to anchor his vision in nineteenth-century America. It was Melville, after all, who proclaimed "Great geniuses are parts of the times, they themselves are the times, and possess a correspondent coloring." The retrieval of Melville's contexts has led scholars to a thoroughgoing reconsideration of his writing in terms of such topics as popular culture, reform movements, the slavery debate, the political scene, and cultural imperialism.

That this retrieval is far from over is indicated by Kelley's book, which takes a seemingly unlikely topic—the influence of the city on Melville—and reveals many hitherto unnoticed dimensions of Melville's links to nineteenth-century society. Historically viewed as primarily a writer of sea adventures, Melville was in fact deeply caught up in the culture of New York, where he spent much of his adult life. Even his apparently escapist sea novels, Kelley demonstrates, are filled with urban imagery reflective of the city environment that shaped Melville's imagination.

Kelley's originality lies in the categories she identifies that freshly illuminate the urban contexts of Melville's fiction. She discusses the popular literature of the time in order to reveal the varied representations of New York as Capital, Labyrinth, City of Man, and City of God. Previous scholars have tended to simplify Melville's relationship to city life by ignoring one or more of these categories. In Kelley's rendering, Melville's capaciousness is underscored by his artistic incorporation of all of them. Kelley convincingly shows that Melville did not uniformly reject or embrace the modern city; instead, he absorbed the full range of popular attitudes toward it, incorporating both positive and negative ones.

In her investigation of New York as Capital, Kelley provides an intriguing overview of pictorial and journalistic representations of the city that fed into the urbanely spectatorial quality of Melville's early novels. Following on the heels of Dana Brand and others who have focused on the urban figure of the flaneur, Kelley notes the flaneur-like aspect of Melville's vision, which enabled him "to capture the adventurous, entrepreneurial spirit of the capital even in his narratives of the sea" (p. 63). The benign atmosphere of *Typee* and *Omoo*, Kelley shows, reflects Melville's straightforward use of popular strategies of urban spectatorship, whereas the more complex *Mardi* begins as "a seemingly harmless spectatorial stroll through a visionary city" but "ends as a mad, criminal launch into other worlds" (p. 93).

Once Melville had deviated from the spectatorly mode of his early novels, he entered what Kelley calls the urban labyrinth. Particularly rewarding sections of Kelley's book are chapters linking *Redburn*, *White-Jacket*, and *Pierre* to images in popular literature describing New York as a labyrinthine arena of so-called "mysteries and miseries." The frivolous pleasures of decadent "upper ten", the haunts and hovels of the wretched poor, the maze-like urban geography of streets and byways—all of these popular images found their way into Melville's fiction.

If the labyrinth chapters reveal the strengths of Kelley's book, they also indicate some of its weaknesses. An omission in Kelley's discussion of popular writing is George Lippard's *The Quaker City; or, The Monks of Monk Hall*, the most popular and powerful portrait of the urban labyrinth in antebellum literature. Kelley perceptively analyzes another Lippard novel, *New York: Its Upper Ten and Lower Million*, but her neglect of the far richer *Quaker City* leaves a gap in her record of Melville's contexts. Perhaps *Quaker City*, which is about Philadelphia, might have struck Kelley as out of place in a study whose main focus is New York, but she shows no diffidence in including other cities—St. Louis, London, and Jerusalem, for instance—in her discussion.

At times Kelley makes too simple a contrast between popular urban novels, which she presents as didactic despite their sensationalism, and Melville's fiction, which she characterizes as uniquely ambiguous. Had she included in her survey *The Quaker City* and other subversive popular works such as George Thompson's *City Crimes* and *New-York Life*, she would have arrived at a darker view of popular portrayals of the city. Still, *Melville's City* adds measurably to our understanding of both the nineteenth-century American city and Melville's literary development.

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MURRAY ROSTON, *Victorian Contexts: Literature and the Visual Arts*. New York: New York University Press, 1996. Pp. x + 246. $45.

Imagine Hazlitt's *The Spirit of the Age* devoted to the Victorian period, by a scholar who writes as well as Hazlitt, has a wider range, is a more subtle thinker, and draws on postmodernist critical theory. Such is Murray Roston's *Victorian Contexts: Literature and the Visual Arts*. His concern with contexts is synchronic, all-inclusive, transmedia, and cross-disciplinary, with each generation's "perspectives" in the sense of "seeing through" one scene into another, each artist's finding a way to cope with the controlling elements of the time. After a brief but helpfully orienting introduction Roston offers six chapters: "Carlyle's 'Fire-Baptism,'" "The Fallen Woman," "Commodity Culture in Dickens and Browning," "George Eliot and the Horizons of Expectation," "Hopkins as Poetic Innovator," and "The Art of Henry James." All of this is richly annotated by forty pages of ranging notes.

The Carlyle chapter begins in an original manner, comparing him to Blake and asking how Carlyle represents "in his very innovativeness, a broader shift in aesthetic sensibility specific to his own time and discernible in related art forms?" (p. 11). With a richness impossible to follow in a brief review, Roston shows Carlyle's shift to intuition mirrored in his tough rhetoric portraying cataclysmic chaos (carefully distinguished from the cyclical ephemeralism of the Romantic poets) countered by the individual's asserting dazzling illumination, expressed through the metaphor of "fire baptism." This turn Roston shows in the vortex effects and the force of light and fire in Turner's paintings. It is unfortunate that the powerful effulgence of Turner has to be illustrated by small black-and-white prints, but one understands the economic reasons.

From Eve to Mary Magdalene to "you've come a long way, baby," the concept of the Fallen Woman has played in the public consciousness, treated with varying degrees of lightness in Chaucer and the Elizabethan and Caroline dramatists, more solemnly and sentimentally by Milton, Goldsmith, and the Romantic poets. By the middle of the nineteenth century it had become a dominant theme. Many have explained this concept literally as reflecting the increased vice and hypocrisy of the Victorians. Questioning whether there is evidence of any significant change in sexual license, Roston persuasively sees this theme as reflecting the uneasy Victorian recognition of contradictions between their moral stance and ruthless materialistic culture. He argues that the Fallen Woman is the other side of the popular notion of the Angel

in the House. Emphasizing the Victorian tendency toward symbolism and allegory, Roston demonstrates by readings of paintings by Holman Hunt, Dante Gabriel Rossetti, and J. E. Millais how this strain in the cultural fabric reveals itself.

Since Dickens began as the provider of continuity for plates of a draughtsman and continued close association with his illustrators, that aspect of his relationship to the visual arts is well known. Roston therefore elects to trace the novelist's synchronic connection revealed in paintings. He turns on its head the idea fostered by Dorothy Van Ghent that for Dickens objects took over the role of people, arguing instead that his characters are projected into the bric-a-brac that expresses their individuality. The Great Exhibition of 1851 displays an England not overwhelmed by materialism but proud of the creativeness that allowed so much choice. For example, extended use of *papier maché*, development of *gutta-percha*, and the invention of bentwood permitted competitive producers of furniture to move from conventional styles to infinite variety, so that Victorians enjoy a personal commodity culture. Roston touches on ramifications of this attitude: more intimate relations with animals (the difference between Stubbs and Landseer), the idiosyncratic variations in the Gothic revival, and the development of the economic theory of supply and demand.

Roston demonstrates, by perceptive readings, that the Victorian interest in people mirrored in their possessions also appeared in the currently popular dramatic monologues. In this genre Browning employs the added dimensions of dramatic objectivity, self-reflexivity, and metrical flexibility for "an irresistible progressive movement" (p. 111) in order to encourage his readers to see inwardly and outwardly, to perceive the Bishop in *The Bishop Ordering His Tomb at St. Praxed's* and the Duke in *My Last Duchess* as both despicable hypocrites and admirable connoisseurs.

George Eliot's expressed attention to seventeenth-century Dutch painting has long been judged a strong influence on her preference for unheroic, common-life scenes, but Roston suggests that she might have been using the Dutch artists as authority for overriding what Hans Robert Jauss has called the readers' "horizon of expectation." Her treatment is less conservative than theirs, more aware of the flux of change, probably to be seen as a synchronic participation in the contemporary Continental Realistic movement expressed by Courbet, Millet, Stendahl, Balzac, Flaubert, and even by David Strauss's *Leben Jesu* which George Eliot translated.

Hopkins's poetry was dismissed as obscure and perverse until Robert Bridges rescued him some forty years later. Across the channel

Cezanne and Van Gogh were at about the same time suffering a similar lag in reputation. It has long been recognized that the poet and painters were marching to the same drummer of Modernism. Roston undertakes to explain how and why this concurrence happened, ranging from the effects of optical discoveries to those of the developing idea of evolution as a process of decadence instead of progress. Sometimes it is hard to follow the parallels he draws between the Post-Impressionists' practice of not mixing colors traditionally on the palate but employing strong blocks and lines of color to work against each other on canvas, and Hopkins's use of sprung rhythm, alliteration, and onomatopoeia to put the force of words against each other in violation of traditional syntax—hard but fascinating.

Henry James poses a special problem in connection with the visual arts because although his novels and memoirs are full of reference to painting and sculpture, he seems not to have approved of or much liked the work of his contemporaries in those fields. Most criticism has therefore applied to his novels a diachronic approach rather than the synchronic one favored by Roston's study. Roston carefully shows, however, that James participated in the shift from a mimetic, religious worship of Nature to emphasis on the interpretative, re-creative power of Art. His values are not so much moral as they are aesthetic; his heroes cognoscenti; his style not naturalistic but deliberately artificial. Thus he belongs with the practitioners of Art Nouveau—with Tiffany, Lalique, and Faberge.

This is an impressive, ranging, well-informed study. Victorian scholars will want to read it; most will take away an enriched conception of their period.

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SHELLEY FISHER FISHKIN. *Lighting Out for the Territory: Reflections on Mark Twain and American Culture.* New York: Oxford University Press, 1997. Pp. viii + 264. $25.

This is yet another contribution to Mark Twain studies by a scholar whose previous work—including, most notably, the celebrated *Was Huck Black? Mark Twain and African-American Voices* and the skillful editorial management of the twenty-nine-volume *Oxford Mark Twain*—has already earned her a place at the forefront of the field. It has been Shelley Fisher Fishkin's calling over the past

decade to serve with energy and distinction in a variety of roles, most of them centered on Mark Twain. She is well known and respected not only as a scholar and teacher but also as an advocate, gadfly, globe-trotting lecturer, and boldly imaginative builder of bridges between separate, and sometimes hostile, literary and cultural encampments. The notes, acknowledgments, and index to this new volume bear witness to the fact that Fishkin has read everything, primary and secondary, on her subject and that she is on warm personal terms with a large and ever-expanding global community of academics, cultural leaders, prominent artists and writers, publishers, and numberless private individuals with connections to or strong interests in the life and work of Mark Twain. It should come as no surprise that Fishkin is President-Elect of the Mark Twain Circle of America. Indeed, she is much more than this, for her influence is very positively to be felt wherever the Lincoln of our Literature makes an appearance.

Lighting Out for the Territory is the kind of loose collection of ruminations, critical observations, anecdotes, and personal memories—Fishkin lumps them together as "reflections" in her subtitle—that veteran scholars sometimes produce. The volume, one feels, gathers together all of the interesting experiences and important insights that somehow did not fit into her earlier work but that demanded to be written down. Naturally enough, there is nothing very precise about the introductory summary of the book's contents. These "interconnected meditations," we are told, "explore some of the challenges that confront us as we follow Twain into the territory that he made his own—and ours."

As the volume unfolds, however, it becomes clear that it is Fishkin herself who has been following Twain and that the territory covered has been quite extensive. Aptly enough in a book about America's premier travel writer, the narrative finds its unity in accounts of journeys that the author has undertaken in pursuit of her subject. It all began on a blustery morning many years ago when Fishkin's mother took her on "a mystery trip" to the Mark Twain House in Hartford, Connecticut. That journey was the first of many, and it marked the initial phase in a continuing and profound American education. "Mark Twain taught me things I needed to know," Fishkin declares. Most of those things had a direct bearing on the problem of race in America. "He taught me to understand the raw racism that lay behind what I saw on the evening news. He taught me that the most well-meaning people can be hurtful and myopic. He taught me to recognize the supreme irony of a country founded on freedom that continued to deny freedom to so many of its citizens." Such lessons are reinforced by the events of sev-

eral subsequent journeys—to Hannibal, Missouri, Elmira, New York, and Cambridge University in England—that are recounted in copious detail and that everywhere confirm for Fishkin Twain's authority on racial matters.

We have had no little inflation of the first-person singular in academic writing of late, and I was therefore initially somewhat suspicious of the pronounced autobiographical impulse on display in *Lighting Out for the Territory*. But deeper immersion in Fishkin's narrative persuaded me that her decidedly personal approach is generally well justified. This is so because her story frequently relies on the direct testimony of people she has run across in her travels. There is Donald Blanford, for example, a man with "quite a few stories of his own to tell," many of them about his forbear, Mary Ann Cord, the subject of Twain's pivotal *Atlantic* sketch "A True Story." It is a tribute to Fishkin's generosity and good judgment, I think, that she gives first-hand informants such as Blanford their own voice. Certainly the force of their commentary is thereby substantially enhanced.

It may be added that Fishkin's special presence in *Lighting Out for the Territory* provides much-needed continuity. The book's first two chapters share a concern with evasions—of history (and especially African-American history) in chapter 1, and of Huck and Jim's quest for freedom in chapter 2. The second evasion differs from the first in Fishkin's reckoning, because Twain is intentionally ironic in his treatment of Tom Sawyer's cruel games with poor Jim. "*Huckleberry Finn* may end in farce," she argues, "but it is not Twain's farce—it is ours. Twain's book is not escapist. It is an escape from the *denial* of the farce we've made of what was—and still is—a noble social and political experiment." The impassioned defense of the novelist and his most famous novel from the charge of complicity in racism is the all-encompassing critical motive in *Lighting Out for the Territory*. It reaches its culmination in chapter 2, which features a lively account of Fishkin's efforts both as a scholar and as an advocate in the mass media to combat those zealous censors who have clamored for the removal of *Huckleberry Finn* from the nation's classrooms. Thereafter her writing betrays a certain falling off, in good part because its animating topic is no longer in the foreground.

Fishkin's ambition to defend *Huckleberry Finn* as "the greatest anti-racist novel by an American" and thereby to protect it from its myopic detractors, will be warmly applauded by most readers. There may be less agreement when it comes to the specifics of her argument. The most crucial instance is when she insists that the novel's representations of racism are everywhere infused with an irony that bears witness

to Mark Twain's presiding antiracist intention. This is a position with special relevance to the novel's concluding chapters, where Huck happily relinquishes the initiative to Tom. Fishkin comments: "My understanding of history, biography, and literature leads me to read the concluding portion of the novel not as Twain's evasion of responsibility as an artist but as a critique of the United States's evasion of these issues." In fact, Fishkin wavers quite conspicuously on the score of intention. At one point she denies any "wish to argue . . . that Twain consciously had these meanings in mind as he wrote." But at another point she declares quite unequivocally that *Huckleberry Finn* "was written to expose the dynamics of racism." Perhaps so, but for more than a century the vast majority of the book's readers and critics have failed to see it that way.

Fishkin knows this, of course, just as she knows that her position on such questions will not win universal assent. But this does nothing to diminish the energy and conviction that she brings to her main objective in *Lighting Out for the Territory*—to remind us and persuade us and prove to us yet once more that we must treasure Mark Twain's *Huckleberry Finn* as the faithful mirror of our condition as a people, and most especially as a people divided along racial lines. The novel teaches us what history often overlooks, and what we are powerfully disposed to forget: "it was not the villains who made the [slave] system work but the ordinary folks who did nothing more than fail to question what was going on around them."

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GEORGE GISSING, *The Collected Letters of George Gissing, Volumes 7–9*. Edited by Paul F. Mattheisen, Arthur C. Young, and Pierre Coustillas. Athens: Ohio University Press, 1995–97. Vol. 7, 1897–1899: pp. lx + 436. Vol. 8, 1900–1902: pp. l + 446. Vol. 9, 1902–1903: pp. xxxvi + 451. $70 each.

"Fate owes me a second lifetime," wrote George Gissing to Gabrielle Fleury, whom he loved and hoped to marry, after his first two marriages had ended in miserable failure. He did achieve a measure of happiness with her, but as these letters show, many troubles awaited him in the last few years of his new life.

During the years covered by the last three volumes of this edition of his collected letters, Gissing had to thread his way through a tor

menting labyrinth of secrets. Fearing discovery by the wife he had been forced to abandon, he hid from her, forbidding his friends to disclose his whereabouts. Unable to obtain a divorce, he kept his family in ignorance of his life with Gabrielle—and even of her existence—for two years, because he feared they would be scandalized by this irregular union. On the other hand, Gabrielle herself never learned, until after Gissing's death, of the first wife he had married in London or of his early crime and imprisonment. Gissing was less than straightforward about the condition of his health in the impassioned love letters he wrote to her. The literary friends with whom he corresponded, such as H. G. Wells, Edward Clodd, and Morley Roberts, heard little or nothing about the difficulties of his life in France with Gabrielle and her invalid mother. His old friend and benefactor, Frederic Harrison, learned of Gabrielle's existence only when he received a mourning card from her after Gissing's death. And the fact that her union with Gissing was "irregular" had to be kept from Gabrielle's eminently respectable friends and relations.

Many of these closed doors are opened in the letters contained in these final volumes, which follow Gissing to his death and complete this massive edition, begun in 1990. (See my reviews of the earlier volumes in *Nineteenth-Century Literature*, 47 [1992], 256–58, and 51 [1996], 126–29.) Like the earlier volumes, these last ones bring together letters that have previously appeared and also contain valuable unpublished material that has been gathered from a wide variety of sources.

These three final volumes continue to present both sides of the correspondence when they are available. They also contain relevant letters and other documents by Gabrielle, Gissing's friends—Eduard Bertz, H. G. Wells, Edward Clodd, and others—and Gissing's letters to his agents, James B. Pinker and William Morris Colles. Among the many themes continued from earlier letters, there is a new one: love. The most important turning point of Gissing's life occurred when Gabrielle wrote to him proposing to translate *New Grub Street* into French and then came to England to meet him at Wells's home. Another visit followed, and Gissing was soon sending impassioned letters to Paris and apparently receiving equally ardent replies, although Gabrielle's letters of this time have not survived.

These outpourings of feeling, which are likely to seem excessive to modern readers, show that Gabrielle had brought Gissing new hope and that he gained a new vitality through his relationship with her. He had reached a kind of dead end after separating from his wife and coming back from his second Italian journey to face an uncertain life

in England as a quasi-invalid. His respiratory disorders were already serious, and he said, with some justification, that Gabrielle's affection saved him from death. After exchanging letters for a few months, the lovers agreed that Gissing would move to France to live with Gabrielle in an unofficial marriage.

When he looked forward to this union, Gissing wrote, "I am accustoming myself to think of nothing but happiness before me." But perfect happiness escaped him after he joined Gabrielle and her mother in their Paris flat. One of his troubles, a constant concern reflected throughout these letters, was his health. His tuberculosis, emphysema, and other conditions made his life in France a continual search for a suitable climate, and he moved restlessly to various regions, sometimes with his new family, sometimes alone, and even spent some weeks at a sanatorium in Yorkshire, a separation that embittered Gabrielle.

Serious frictions turned up in Gissing's new household, which was divided by national differences in matters of food and social customs. There are painful insights into the situation in Gissing's complaints to certain friends and in Gabrielle's descriptions of his character and the difficulties she encountered in caring for two invalids whose needs often conflicted. At one point Gissing declared that he did not mean to die in order to please Gabrielle's mother.

Another problem was his continued need of money. Gabrielle had her own income, but Gissing was responsible for supporting his wife and two sons, and he also had to help his brother, Algernon, from time to time. His old dirge about ending in the workhouse is still heard in these letters, and in the year before his death he complained that my fame brings me no money, my books have only the smallest sale.

In spite of these problems, and in spite of his inability to find a place to live where, as he said, he could be comfortably ill, Gissing continued to be productive, and the letters enable readers to follow his writing and his negotiations with his publishers and agents in some detail. Gissing felt that he must continue writing steadily in order to hold the public's attention, for his novels sold slowly and he could no longer rely on his old publisher, Lawrence and Bullen, which had published his work under very generous terms but was now forced to dispose of the unsold stock of his books.

Gissing began to write *The Crown of Life* soon after meeting Gabrielle, and all of his work afterward was written on the Continent in the midst of many difficulties with only short intervals of leisure. He complained that the doctors ordered him to cut his daily writing hours [illegible] nevertheless produced a respectable amount of work

these five years, including four novels, a number of short stories, and introductions to editions of Dickens's novels. It is remarkable that for a man who valued the comfort of routine, Gissing was able to work effectively while moving about and often staying in temporary lodgings during his search for a healthful climate. He began his travel book, *By the Ionian Sea*, while living in the Paris apartment he considered uncomfortable, making use of the diary he had kept during his Italian journey. He completed *Our Friend the Charlatan* and wrote *The Private Papers of Henry Ryecroft* at St. Honoré-les-Bains, a summer refuge. The task of abridging Forster's *Life of Charles Dickens* was a welcome assignment, but the ailing Gissing had to write while reclining on a chaise longue after moving, for health reasons, to the warmer climate of Arcachon, where he lived in a pension.

Although her letters are only quoted briefly in the footnotes of earlier volumes, the unsung heroine of this period of Gissing's life is Clara Collet, a sociologist interested in women's issues whom Gissing had met in 1893, after she had given a lecture on his novels and invited him to visit her. She persisted in befriending the elusive novelist and entered usefully into his personal affairs, trying to help him with his difficult second marriage and offering to pay for his sons' education. In his letters to her Gissing often described the progress of his work, and she was apparently the one correspondent to whom he could write candidly about his family troubles. She corresponded both with Gabrielle and with Edith, Gissing's estranged wife, and Gabrielle's confiding letters to her about Gissing's health and money troubles show that she counted on Miss Collet for support. She was faithful even after the end, for after Gissing's death she came to the small town in southern France where he had died in order to comfort Gabrielle and her mother.

Among the most striking contributions of these volumes are the unpublished documents from Gabrielle, including letters to various friends and a long series of "Recollections" that record many details of her life with Gissing. She is not an objective observer, for she was jealous of the power she thought Gissing's mother and sisters had over him and resented his view that their relationship was too shameful to be revealed to them. In addition, the need to care for two invalids, her husband and her mother, while constantly seeking a place to live and sometimes falling ill herself, was of course an intolerable emotional strain. In spite of these limitations, Gabrielle's accounts of Gissing and their life together bring the visible and audible Gissing before us with unprecedented vividness. There is no doubt that in spite of all their troubles they had a profound affection for each other, and [illegible]

ing's life with Gabrielle was stimulating and enriching. He could discuss literature and ideas with her, a total impossibility in his earlier marriages. She recorded details about his tastes and opinions, his accounts of experiences in New Grub Street, the lives of other writers, his comments about their travels, and his writing habits. He told her that he did not begin a novel until he had thought about it at length and had his plan clearly in mind, and then he wrote quickly, making changes and numerous corrections as he went along. He felt that a novel in progress underwent a kind of organic growth and had to be allowed to mature at its own pace in the writer's mind. Hence *Veranilda*, begun under another title in 1901, was set aside until he felt ready to continue it in 1903. His characters were not based on actual people but were composites of traits he had observed in a variety of individuals. He told her that he thought of the last sentence of a story while writing it and then wrote his way toward it, a fascinating disclosure that leads one to reexamine these final sentences of Gissing's works.

Much of Gabrielle's writing is sadly concerned with her poor George's health, and the last part of her "Recollections" is a detailed narrative of the time of his death. Gissing lingered on his deathbed for about a week, and there have been several descriptions of this harrowing scene as the dying man suffered delirium and convulsions and struggled to breathe. Gabrielle's account is the most complete and no doubt the most authoritative.

In addition to the letters by Gissing and his associates and those addressed to him, the editors have added an appendix of the correspondence that followed his death, mainly letters of consolation sent to Gabrielle. There was an outpouring of sympathy for her and many testimonials to the value that people had attached to Gissing's friendship. It is obvious that he had touched many lives through personal relationships as well as through his books.

Now that this project has been completed, it stands as a model of scholarship and editorial skill. The texts of the letters are superbly produced according to consistent, well-conceived editorial principles, but the exceptional aspect of the nine volumes is their apparatus. The letters are accompanied by exhaustive annotations about Gissing's acquaintances, the books he read, details about the places and events mentioned, and similar information that put them within a context of considerable depth. Especially useful are the introductions to each volume, which shrewdly assess the motives and feelings of the correspondents and provide relevant factual background. Taken in succession, the introductions amount to a letter-centered biography of Gissing that is very rich in detail. The extensive cumulative indexes

in the final volume enable the reader to locate information about the numerous people, places, and books that touched Gissing's active life. The unpublished materials that the collection's editors have discovered through vigorous research add a great deal to our knowledge of Gissing's thoughts, feelings, and activities. By integrating these new materials with letters from scattered published sources into a coherently edited and thoroughly annotated whole, these volumes open a panoramic view of the life and career of one of the major Victorian novelists.

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Books Briefly Noted

Armstrong, Isobel, and Joseph Bristow, with Cath Sharrock, eds. *Nineteenth-Century Women Poets: An Oxford Anthology.* Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996. Pp. xlii + 826. £25.

Opening with Anna Laetitia Barbauld's petition to William Wilberforce "on the Rejection of the Bill for Abolishing the Slave Trade, 1791" and ending with the myth-making Irish writers of the Celtic revival, *Nineteenth-Century Women Poets* presents the work of over one hundred writers, some of it familiar to modern readers but more often than not neglected and generally unavailable. Its retrieval here in its proper historical and bibliographical contexts helps re-create in telling detail an important aspect of nineteenth-century literary culture.

Austen, Jane, et al. *The Poetry of Jane Austen and the Austen Family.* Edited by David Selwyn. Iowa City: University of Iowa Press and the Jane Austen Society, 1997. Pp. xxiii + 106. $12.95 paper.

A must for all Janeites, this welcome edition of Austen family verses—including bouts-rimés, riddles, and charades—has the virtue of showing the lively role that poetry played in the everyday entertainment of a middle-class Regency household. Although Selwyn's introduction is disappointingly short, his explanatory headnotes and copious textual notes give this volume scholarly authority. Revealing how at an early age she honed her incisive wit, Austen's poems throw useful light on her creative and intellectual development.

Barstow, Jane Missner. *One Hundred Years of American Women Writing, 1848–1948: An Annotated Bio-Bibliography.* Magill Bibliographies Series. Lanham, Md.: Scarecrow Press, 1997. Pp. xii + 333. $42.

This volume is divided into six chapters, which group authors under these headings: late-nineteenth-century fiction writers, early-twentieth-century fiction writers, poets, dramatists, and experimental writers, intellectuals, reformers, and journalists, African-American women writers, and ethnic women writers. Each of these chapters begins with an introduction that establishes literary and historical context and identifies general studies and relevant journals. For each of the sixty-six writers covered by individual entries there is a brief biographical sketch, a listing of reissued editions of her writings, and annotations of a broad range of scholarly articles, book chapters, and full-length books on her life and work.

Bennett, Bridget. *The Damnation of Harold Frederic: His Lives and Works.* Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1997. Pp. xxii + 261. $39.95.

Drawing upon material previously unavailable to scholars, the author of this biography writes in less of a critical and factual vacuum than she would sometimes have the reader believe, but she does provide nevertheless a fuller and more illuminating portrait of the illusive and problematic author than has been previously available.

BROWN, DANIEL. *Hopkins' Idealism: Philosophy, Physics, Poetry.* Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997. Pp. xvi + 345. $85.

Opening with a detailed account of how Benjamin Jowett's and T. H. Green's idealism influenced the "Greats" syllabus at Oxford, this substantial interdisciplinary study provides an illuminating context for understanding the philosophical bases to Hopkins's complex aesthetics and poetics. *Hopkins' Idealism* reveals how Hopkins's early undergraduate engagement with received models of Hegelian self-consciousness left its mark upon his inquiries into mechanistic physics, notably the rules governing the conservation and release of energy. Later chapters situate the poet's fascination with prosodic stress in the wide-ranging midcentury scientific debates about thermodynamics and applied mechanics conducted by James Clerk Maxwell, W. J. M. Rankine, and William Thomson. Although primarily aimed at specialist readers of Hopkins, Brown's valuable book adds greatly to our increasingly rich knowledge of how Victorian Oxford helped transform late-nineteenth-century intellectual life in Britain.

BUDICK, EMILY MILLER. *Nineteenth-Century American Romance: Genre and the Construction of Democratic Culture.* Studies in Literary Themes and Genres Series, no. 8. New York: Twayne Publishers, 1996. Pp. xiv + 186. $24.95.

Argues that nineteenth-century romance fiction—as exemplified by James Fenimore Cooper (*The Prairie*), Edgar Allan Poe ("The Fall of the House of Usher"), Nathaniel Hawthorne (*The Scarlet Letter*), Herman Melville (*Moby-Dick*), and Henry James (*The Portrait of a Lady*), among others—is both an evolving literary aesthetic and a cultural philosophy, as well as an effort by a group of writers to produce what Noah Webster called an "American tongue," a language imbued with the values of democracy and pluralism. Through its challenging appropriations of formalist, deconstructionist, new historicist, and feminist modes of interpretation, the book argues that nineteenth-century American romance writers were less concerned with representing a world than with creating one through language, possessing a self-conscious literariness that separates the genre from the novel of the nineteenth century and anticipates postmodernist conceptions of fictionality.

CARABINE, KEITH. *The Life and the Art: A Study of Conrad's "Under Western Eyes."* Costerus New Series, no. 106. Amsterdam and Atlanta, Ga.: Editions Rodopi, 1996. Pp. xxx + 266. $56 paper.

Providing an exhaustive account of the composition of *Under Western Eyes*, this study broadens its scope to consider Conrad's conflicting responses to his father's Polish nationalism and to the despised Russian cultural context that produced Fyodor Dostoevsky. Drawing together detailed textual evidence and previously unacknowledged historical sources, Carabine seeks to show why Conrad believed that this was "the most deeply meditated novel that came from under my pen."

CELLY, ASHOK. *Emily Brontë, D. H. Lawrence, and "The Black Horse."* Delhi: Pragati Publications, 1997. Pp. xviii + 114.

Claiming that both Emily Brontë and D. H. Lawrence form "part of a European stream of protest against a civilization that represses the body," Celly reads *Wuthering Heights* in opposition to the perspective that J. Hillis Miller drew in 1963 on the lasting influence that Aunt Branwell's Protestantism had upon her young charges at Haworth. But in stating that the novel needs to be read in "Laurentian [*sic*] terms so that we see how Heathcliff represents Catherine's animal self—its a-moral nature—in all its purity and integrity," Celly seems unaware of the striking familiarity of his approach.

CHAPPLE, JOHN. *Elizabeth Gaskell: The Early Years.* Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1997. Pp. xviii + 492. $39.95.

This impressive biography, by one of the most established and respected Gaskell scholars, provides a comprehensive account of Gaskell's development to the time of her marriage in 1832. Chapple's imposing study will invite comparisons with Jenny Uglow's prizewinning biography of a writer whose remarkable significance in the thriving intellectual world of early-Victorian Manchester has only recently begun to be appreciated. The Bibliographical Appendix is particularly informative, itemizing the locations of archives and papers belonging to the many notable families—including the Gregs and Wedgwoods—with which Gaskell was associated.

CHILD, LYDIA MARIA. *A Lydia Maria Child Reader.* Edited by Carolyn L. Karcher. New Americanists Series. Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1997. Pp. x + 458. $49.95 cloth, $17.95 paper.

In seeking to represent all of the major facets of Child's long and important career, this collection ranges much wider in reflecting Child's interests and activities than Karcher's earlier collection, *HOBOMOK and Other Writings on Indians* (1986). The *Reader* is divided into six parts: The Indian Question; Children's Literature and Domestic Advice; Slavery, Race, and Reconstruction; Journalism and Social Critique; Sexuality and the Woman Question; and Religion.

CLARK, TIMOTHY, and JERROLD E. HOGLE, eds. *Evaluating Shelley.* Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press for the University of Durham, 1996. Pp. x + 266. $69.50.

Developed from papers delivered at a number of conferences celebrating the bicentenary of the poet's birth, this collection provides an opportunity to consider recent critical approaches to estimating Shelley's value within the canon, as well as his own thoughts on what we now call canonicity. Contributors include some of the most distinguished scholars of English Romanticism, notably Marilyn Butler, Jerrold E. Hogle, and Donald H. Reiman, together with researchers, like John Donovan, noted for their significant contributions to the textual editing of Shelley's poetry.

DACRE, CHARLOTTE. *Zofloya, or, The Moor: A Romance of the Fifteenth Century.* Edited by Adriana Craciun. Broadview Literary Texts Series. Peterborough, Ont.: Broadview Press, 1997. Pp. 302. $12.95 paper.

Like other editions in this fine series, this one provides an informative critical introduction, as well as several appendixes featuring notable sources for Dacre's novel and selections from the reviews it received in 1806. This volume helps expand and revise our understanding of the female Gothic, revealing how a woman writer of this period could have stronger affiliations with Sade and "Monk" Lewis than with Ann Radcliffe and Charlotte Smith.

DENNIS, IAN. *Nationalism and Desire in Early Historical Fiction.* New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997. Pp. x + 203. $49.95.

Locating René Girard's well-known model of "triangular" or "mimetic" desire within the context of early-nineteenth-century nationalism, Dennis proceeds to an analysis of the "pre-Oedipal nation" in Jane Porter's *The Scottish Chiefs* and Sydney Owenson's *The Wild Irish Girl* before moving to more extensive treatments of Scott's Waverley novels. Later chapters argue that James Fenimore Cooper's reaction against Scott puts a new gloss on Girard's perspective. In so doing, the study aims to chart some of the faultlines that threaten to undermine those nineteenth-century fictions pursuing the belief that nationalism is a type of romance.

DEVOTO, BERNARD. *Mark Twain's America.* Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1997. Pp. xxiv + 351. $15 paper.

Originally published, as all good Mark Twain scholars know, in 1932 (in part in rebuttal to Van Wyck Brooks's *The Ordeal of Mark Twain*), but very few today understand the true worth of this book as well as Louis J. Budd, who writes the introduction to this Bison Books Edition and whose words are a delight to read—just as are those of Bernard DeVoto.

ERSKINE-HILL, HOWARD. *Poetry of Opposition and Revolution: Dryden to Wordsworth.* Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996. Pp. xii + 272. $68.

Devoting his seven chapters to Dryden, Pope, Johnson, and Wordsworth, Erskine-Hill explores the different techniques used by these poets when adopting a variety of anti-Hanoverian and Jacobin standpoints. His approach reveals how the revisionary historical research into this period—exemplified by J. C. D. Clark and Simon Schama—has challenged "the long-lingering Whig triumphalist vision of those precarious and uncertain years," thus creating a new framework for literary historians to conceptualize the relations between poetry and oppositional politics.

FRANK, FREDERICK S., and ANTHONY MAGISTRALE, eds. *The Poe Encyclopedia.* Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1997. Pp. xxiv + 453. $89.50.

With more than nineteen hundred alphabetically arranged entries, this reference book provides coverage of every aspect of Poe's life and literary work including his reading, his responses to literary figures and events at home and abroad, and the responses to his works by other writers and critics. Every entry for Poe's fiction and poetry contains a critical synopsis, and, except for those identifying Poe's characters, all entries are accompanied by selected bibliographies.

FRASER, HILARY, with DANIEL BROWN. *English Prose of the Nineteenth Century.* Longman Literature in English Series. Harlow: Addison Wesley Longman, 1997. Pp. xiv + 439. £48 cloth, £18.99 paper.

In this comprehensive study of nonfictional prose, the authors have sensibly chosen to approach this dauntingly large area of inquiry by dividing their materials into three domains: prose of discovery, life stories, and discourses of culture. The category of discovery embraces scientific writers (particularly Humphry Davy and Charles Darwin), travel writing (William Cobbett, David Livingstone, Mary Kingsley), and social reportage (Henry Mayhew, William Booth). By comparison, the chapter on life stories focuses on the lively nineteenth-century exchanges about the nature of biography while examining a range of autobiographies by authors as diverse as Harriet Martineau and 'Walter' (*My Secret Life*). The substantial third chapter follows a somewhat more conventional pattern encompassing Coleridge, Carlyle, Mill, and Arnold, though welcome space is made for significant female contributors—such as Anna Jameson—to cultural debate. Like other books in this noteworthy series, this one contains a detailed chronology that enables readers to see basic links between text and context. Six thorough general bibliographies provide thoughtfully annotated guides to more specialized materials, and the concluding section features detailed profiles of individual authors, offering concise biographical information and further bibliographical resources. If aimed mainly at advanced undergraduate and beginning graduate students, this exemplary volume also serves as an excellent reference work for colleagues teaching and researching this expansive field.

FREEMAN, KATHRYN. *Blake's Nostos: Fragmentation and Nondualism in "The Four Zoas."* SUNY Series in Western Esoteric Traditions. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1997. Pp. x + 208. $49.50 cloth, $16.95 paper.

This extremely close reading of Blake's unfinished epic contends that the common assumption of the poet's "surrender to orthodoxy is the most dire misreading" of his "mythos." Each chapter focuses attention on how *The Four Zoas* does more than reverse the positions of intuition and reason in Enlightenment thought. Freeman claims that Blake's poetry explores instead the possibility that a "nondual relationship between subject and object," even if "a tenuous attainment," can and must retain its potential in the "direst moments of fragmentation, separation, and fear."

Gissing, George. *George Gissing's Memorandum Book: A Novelist's Notebook, 1895–1902*. Edited by Bouwe Postmus. Salzburg English and American Studies Series, no. 33. Salzburg: Institut für Anglistik und Amerikanistik, Universität Salzburg, 1997. Pp. xvi + 82. £10.95 paper.

Postmus brings a massive amount of secondary material to throw light on Gissing's brief and often elliptical notes in this memorandum book. This short volume illuminates aspects of Gissing's working methods, particularly in relation to the composition of *The Private Papers of Henry Ryecroft*.

Glen, Heather, ed. *Jane Eyre*. New Casebooks Series. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997. Pp. x + 264. $39.95.

Furnished with a detailed introduction examining changing trends in critical approaches to *Jane Eyre*, this collection reprints recent essays that reflect important developments in feminist, Marxist, historicist, and anti-imperialist critiques of the novel. Contributors include Karen Chase, Susan Meyer, Mary Poovey, and Elaine Showalter.

Glendening, John. *The High Road: Romantic Tourism, Scotland, and Literature, 1720–1820*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997. Pp. xi + 282. $39.95.

Aiming to reveal how modern tourism arose in eighteenth-century England by taking Scotland as its ideal location, this study focuses on well-known tours undertaken by Defoe, Johnson, and Dorothy and William Wordsworth as well as Keats's writings on his 1818 journey. In addition, Glendening explores the fictional representation of the Scottish tour in *The Expedition of Humphry Clinker* and *Waverley*. Taken together, the chapters intend to show how in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries "Scotland" was a "joint production" whereby "the English and the Scots worked together to produce a formulation that would serve both of their needs." By placing an accent on the "dialogic" condition of this form of cultural imperialism, the author reveals that he is following a recent trend in postcolonial studies that avoids the representation of a "wholly silent Other" that he claims underwrites Edward Said's influential account of how the West constructed the Orient.

Haines, Simon. *Shelley's Poetry: The Divided Self*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997. Pp. viii + 276. $59.95.

Prefacing his study with an apology for writing yet another book on Shelley, Haines contends that there is still a case to be made for a full-length inquiry into the vexed position of the poet's reputation during the past two centuries. After a detailed examination of the great divergence in the critical estimation of Shelley's art, Haines proceeds to an exploration of the poet's own views of poetry. The remaining chapters consider the major poems as "genuinely transformative responses to ideas and experiences."

HALL, DONALD E. *Fixing Patriarchy: Feminism and Mid-Victorian Male Novelists.* New York: New York University Press, 1996. Pp. x + 236. $50 cloth, $17.95 paper.

Covering a broad sweep of writings from the midcentury, Hall considers how male authors with differing political outlooks confronted the increasingly public presence of organized feminism during this period. He justifies his use of "patriarchy"—by his own admission "a dauntingly broad term"—as a useful organizing concept for encompassing the cultural processes through which men maintained their social privilege. Chapters range across well-known works such as *Martin Chuzzlewit*, *The Princess*, *Alton Locke*, and *Little Dorrit*, concluding with an analysis of the "ideological jumble" identifiable in Trollope's representation of strong female characters, especially Lady Glencora Palliser in *The Prime Minister*.

HARDY, THOMAS. *The Life and Death of the Mayor of Casterbridge: A Story of a Man of Character.* Edited by Norman Page. Broadview Literary Texts Series. Peterborough, Ont.: Broadview Press, 1997. Pp. 411. $9.95 paper.

Equipped with a substantial introduction and no less than eleven appendixes, this edition provides student readers with as fully a contextualized account of the novel as they are ever likely to need. It is a pity that Hardy's own map of Wessex reprints badly in these otherwise finely produced pages.

HARES-STRYKER, CAROLYN, ed. *An Anthology of Pre-Raphaelite Writings.* New York: New York University Press, 1997. Pp. 391. $55 cloth, $24.95 paper.

This handsomely produced volume leads readers through a wealth of poetry, prose fiction, and critical works by and about the P.R.B. and its legacy from the late 1840s to the Edwardian era. It opens with familiar publications such as *The Germ* and Dickens's and Ruskin's contemporary responses to the emergent Brotherhood before moving on to address notable later developments like the "Fleshly School" controversy. These are complemented by lesser-known and often illuminating writings by authors such as Sebastian Evans and Thomas Gordon Hake. Featuring sixteen fine color plates and a great many engravings and sketches by prominent Pre-Raphaelites, Hares-Stryker's book will readily serve as an interdisciplinary course reader. Teachers using this impressive anthology, however, may wish to augment it with supplementary materials that give a stronger sense of the contributions made by women writers and artists to Pre-Raphaelitism as it diversified across many areas of Victorian cultural production.

HEWITT, REGINA. *The Possibilities of Society: Wordsworth, Coleridge, and the Sociological Viewpoint of English Romanticism.* The Margins of Literature Series. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1997. Pp. xviii + 231. $57.50 cloth, $18.95 paper.

Examining the work of founding sociologists such as Durkheim, Weber, and Simmel, this interdisciplinary study considers how the efforts of such thinkers to illuminate "*situated* behavior" and "interpretive understanding" offers an enlightening context for the "poetic sociology" of Coleridge and Wordsworth. Through imaginative writing, Hewitt argues, these poets "abstracted and analyzed the features of social experience they wanted to understand." The closing chapters extend these insights to the "socially engaged" poetry of Byron, Keats, and Shelley.

HORWITZ, BARBARA J. *British Women Writers 1700–1850: An Annotated Bibliography of Their Works and Works about Them.* Magill Bibliographies Series. Lanham, Md.: Scarecrow Press, 1997. Pp. xx + 231. $37.

Among the many nineteenth-century writers featured in this succinct bibliography are Jane Austen, Joanna Baillie, Charlotte Brontë, Elizabeth Barrett Browning, Felicia Hemans, Harriet Martineau, and Mary Russell Mitford. Concise biographical headnotes preface annotated lists of selected editions, essays, and monographs on each author. Although such a bibliography might have some uses for undergraduates seeking guidance on noteworthy scholarship, it is surprising to find among the wealth of fine critical writing on Charlotte Brontë that one of the most influential studies—by Helene Moglen—is attributed to "Helen Moglin." One can only hope this is an isolated error.

HUGHES, GEORGE, ed. *Corresponding Powers: Studies in Honour of Professor Hisaaki Yamanouchi.* Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1997. Pp. xvi + 248. $63.

Published to honor Hisaaki Yamanouchi on his retirement in 1995 from his distinguished career at the University of Tokyo, this volume brings together essays by some of the most established scholars of English Romanticism—including John Beer, J. R. de J. Jackson, and Jonathan Wordsworth—and major researchers of the late nineteenth century and Modernism, such as Michael Millgate and John Carey. Yamanouchi was the first Japanese graduate to receive a doctorate in English from Cambridge, and among his students was Nobel laureate Kenzaburo Oe, who contributes one of the concluding tributes to the lasting influence of this noted teacher.

INGHAM, PATRICIA. *The Language of Gender and Class: Transformation in the Victorian Novel.* New York: Routledge, 1996. Pp. x + 197. $59.95 cloth, $15.95 paper.

Examining six major novels, Ingham demonstrates that none of the writers, male or female, completely accepts stereotypes of gender and class. The authorized figures of Angel and Whore are reassessed and modified in their works. The result is that by the late nineteenth century the treatment of gender is released from its task of containing and neutralizing class conflict. New accounts of femininity can thus begin to emerge. The novels that Ingham studies are *Shirley*, *North and South*, *Felix Holt*, *Hard Times*, *The Unclassed*, and *Jude the Obscure*.

JAMES, HENRY. *Henry James: Essays on Art and Drama.* Edited by Peter Rawlings. Brookfield, Vt.: Scolar Press, 1997. Pp. x + 537. $99.95.

The reprinting in facsimile of some fifty-six essays and reviews relating to painting, drama, and the theater—many of them not easily available and rarely reprinted—hardly seems to justify this undertaking. There are no headnotes, footnotes, or index, and the "editor's" introduction is short and extremely subjective. The paper is good, however, and the binding durable.

JAMES, WILLIAM. *The Correspondence of William James, Volume 5: 1878–1884.* Edited by Ignas K. Skrupskelis and Elizabeth M. Berkeley, with William Bradbeer. Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1997. Pp. lxvi + 677. $60.

This critical edition of letters by and to William James is projected to be completed in twelve volumes and will contain about seventy percent of the located correspondence, with the remaining thirty percent calendared in appendixes. The annotations are succinct but usually adequate to provide readers an appropriate context for understanding, and the twenty-nine-page biographical and historical introduction (written by Linda Simon) serves its purposes extremely well.

JAMES, WILLIAM, and HENRY JAMES. *William and Henry James: Selected Letters.* Edited by Ignas K. Skrupskelis and Elizabeth M. Berkeley. Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1997. Pp. xxxvi + 570. $39.95.

John J. McDermott has written the introduction to this selection of 216 letters from the 740 known letters and postcards exchanged between the brothers and published in the first three volumes of *The Correspondence of William James* (1992–).

JARVIS, ADRIAN. *Samuel Smiles and the Construction of Victorian Values.* Stroud, Gloucestershire: Sutton Publishing, 1997. Pp. xvi + 176. $28.95.

Aiming at "a reasonably continuous and readable account for the general reader," Jarvis sets out to emphasize some unusual aspects of the writer most often associated with the smug lower-middle-class doctrine of "self-help" and of his role in disseminating Victorian ideas of progress. Successive chapters chart Smiles's early radicalism before analyzing *The Life of George Stephenson*, *Self Help*, and *Lives of the Engineers*. The conclusion examines Smiles's place in relation to the idealized "Victorian values" championed by Margaret Thatcher in the 1980s. Jarvis argues that such "values" were in some respects wrongly associated with Smiles's name.

JOHNSTON, JUDITH. *Anna Jameson: Victorian, Feminist, Woman of Letters*. Brookfield, Vt.: Scolar Press, 1997. Pp. xiv + 264. $76.95.

This impressive study of Jameson's diverse canon—including her Canadian *Winter Studies* and essays on Shakespeare's women—reveals the full breadth of this gifted writer's achievements. Individual chapters explore such topics as Jameson's unique approach to biography, her numerous essays on Italian art, and her position within London intellectual circles like the Langham Place group.

KNIGHT, DENISE D., ed. *Nineteenth-Century American Women Writers: A Bio-Bibliographical Critical Sourcebook*. Advisory Editor Emmanuel S. Nelson. Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1997. Pp. xiv + 534. $99.50.

Each of these seventy-seven separate entries, arranged alphabetically and written by different contributors, provides a biographical sketch, a discussion of the writer's major works and themes, an overview of the critical response to the writer, and a bibliography of works by and about the writer. Two small changes would have made this volume an even more useful reference resource: arranging the entries chronologically (allowing readers more easily to examine the authors in their generational contexts) and providing annotations for the bibliography of significant studies of nineteenth-century American women writers that is included at the end of the compilation.

LEE, HSIAO-HUNG. *Possibilities of Hidden Things: Narrative Transgression in Victorian Fictional Autobiographies*. Studies in Nineteenth-Century British Literature Series, vol. 5. New York: Peter Lang, 1996. Pp. xiv + 178. $42.95.

Lee turns to *Jane Eyre*, *Villette*, and *David Copperfield* by way of exploring the recent critical vogue for Foucauldian and Nietzschean models of "transgression." He maintains that the "narrative transgression" of these much-analyzed works refers "to the conflict between the dominant narrative voices that carry moral lessons and submerged discourses that dwell on the shifting and unstable representation of identity of the 'self.'" This rather elaborate poststructuralist framework supports many mundane observations. So, for example, we learn that the "conflict between Reason and Feeling" that torments Lucy Snowe "can never be resolved." In conclusion, Lee asserts that the "act of transgression breaks the boundaries between reality and imagination."

LEVI, GIOVANNI, and JEAN-CLAUDE SCHMITT, eds. *A History of Young People in the West*. 2 volumes. Translated by Camille Naish, Carol Volk, and Keith Botsford. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1997. *Volume One: Ancient and Medieval Rites of Passage*, pp. viii + 396; *Volume Two: Stormy Evolution to Modern Times*, pp. vi + 409. $35 each.

In the tradition of Harvard University Press's acclaimed *A History of Private Life*, this sweeping account attempts to show what it has meant to be young in Western societies from ancient times to the twentieth century. Much in the second volume deals with youth in the nineteenth century and should prove of general interest to many of this journal's readers (as indeed should all eighteen of the individually authored monographs that make up these two volumes).

LLOYD, TOM. *Crises of Realism: Representing Experience in the British Novel, 1816–1910.* Cranbury, NJ: Bucknell University Press and Associated University Presses, 1997. Pp. 237. $37.50.

Tracing "tensions in emplotment in the English novel from Jane Austen to E. M. Forster," this study examines how realism strives to impose order on "experience"—a category that, like 'history,' Lloyd considers 'messy, chaotic and not easily given to organization.'" His discussion opens with Burke's exploration of "the organizing and intuitive and ironic fictions imposed on historical flux." Later chapters explore similar preoccupations in canonical novels including *Jane Eyre*, *Great Expectations*, *Middlemarch*, and *Howards End*. This genealogy of writings suggests increasing difficulties for novelists seeking to create structural unities in the face of experiential disarray.

MANCUSO, LUKE. *The Strange Sad War Revolving: Walt Whitman, Reconstruction, and the Emergence of Black Citizenship, 1865–1876.* Studies in English and American Literature, Linguistics and Culture Series. Columbia, S.C.: Camden House, 1997. Pp. xvi + 152. $55.

Reads Whitman's publications appearing during the Reconstuction period in the context of the legislative discourse on black emancipation and its stormy aftermath.

McCARTHY, THOMAS J. *Relationships of Sympathy: The Writer and the Reader in British Romanticism.* Brookfield, Vt.: Scolar Press, 1997. Pp. x + 171. $67.95.

Tracing the development of philosophical discourses on sympathy from David Hume to Martin Buber, McCarthy provides a broad intellectual context to understanding the Romantic preoccupation with entering the emotional life of the Other. He analyzes prominent works on this topic, including William Hazlitt's *Essay on the Principles of Human Action*, as well as lesser-known writings such as the diaries of country clergyman William Jones. Later chapters explore the representation of sympathy in letters (notably Coleridge's correspondence), autobiographies (including memoirs by Daniel Mendoza, Mary Robinson, and Olaudah Equiano), and the poetry of John Clare.

McKNIGHT, NATALIE J. *Suffering Mothers in Mid-Victorian Novels.* New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997. Pp. xiv + 162. $39.95.

This study first discusses familiar Victorian writings on motherhood by Sarah Stickney Ellis, Sarah Lewis, and Isabella Beeton, together with medical guidebooks by Thomas Bull and Henry Allbut, before proceeding to a brief overview of feminist theories of mothering by Dorothy Dinnerstein, Nancy Chodorow and Carol Gilligan. With these historical and theoretical bearings in place, McKnight examines suffering mothers in well-known novels such as *Great Expectations*, *Jane Eyre*, *Vanity Fair*, and *Middlemarch*. These succinct inquiries lead to the perhaps questionable conclusion that these "authors compensate for unsatisfactory mothering by becoming the ideal mothers to their own texts."

MAYNARD, JOHN, and ADRIENNE AUSLANDER MUNICH, et al., eds. *Victorian Literature and Culture, Volume 23*. New York: AMS Press, 1996. Pp. x + 447. $69.50.

Ever since its transformation from *Browning Institute Studies*, *Victorian Literature and Culture* has gone from strength to strength, with this volume counting as the most imposing to date. The editors have brought together over twenty new essays that reveal a welcome catholicity of approach and an impressively broad range of topics. Although the Brownings are still well represented in these pages—in notable essays by Rowena Fowler, Caroline Roberts, and Sharon Smulders, as well as in Sandra Donaldson's annual bibliography—the contents extend to many other topics including Victorian homosexual tourism (Chris White), Morris and the socialist New Woman (Florence Boos), and an assessment of recent critical inquiries into the nation-state (Patrick Brantlinger). From 1997 onward, *Victorian Literature and Culture* will continue its excellent work in volumes published by Cambridge University Press.

MONTGOMERY, MARION. *Romantic Confusions of the Good: Beauty as Truth, Truth Beauty*. Lanham, Md.: Rowman and Littlefield, 1997. Pp. xxxiv + 237. $62.50 cloth, $23.95 paper.

Comprising eighteen concise essays, Montgomery's study ranges across selected works by Wordsworth, Keats, Stevens, and T. S. Eliot in order to explore how, in the period between Descartes and Freud, the intellect's presumption of its authoritative autonomy over being is thrown into crisis, driven on some occasions toward euphoria while on others toward ennui. This critical discussion, which is as much theological as it is literary, continuously upholds the Thomist view that *Intellect* in the singular designates a particular discrete unity in relation to a specific unique *soul—a person myself* larger than my intellect." Montgomery's readings thus try to expose the Vertoist error in believing that the intellect can be dislocated from an all-encompassing reality.

MSISKA, MPALIVE-HANGSON, and PAUL HYLAND, eds. *Writing and Africa*. Crosscurrents Series. New York: Longman, 1997. Pp. xii + 308. $49.95 cloth, $19.95 paper.

Although concentrating mainly on twentieth-century African writing in English, this collection includes an essay by Terence Rogers on H. Rider Haggard and popular fictions of Africa. The volume features established researchers in postcolonial literary studies, including Gareth Griffiths and Lyn Innes, as well as several notable emergent scholars such as Kadiatu Kanneh.

NEVILL, BARRY ST-JOHN, ed. *Life at the Court of Queen Victoria, 1861–1901. Illustrated from the Collection of Lord Edward Pelham-Clinton, Master of the Household, with Selections from the "Journals" of Queen Victoria.* Stroud, Gloucestershire: Sutton Publishing, 1997. Pp. 224. $26.95 paper.

This welcome reprint of the 1984 edition published by Salem House provides a visually appealing supplement to the gathering critical explorations of the public life and private writings of Queen Victoria by critics such as Margaret Homans and Adrienne Auslander Munich. The high-quality color reproductions of noted paintings, especially those featuring Her Majesty by Landseer, Winterhalter, and von Angeli, make this volume a great pleasure to behold.

NORTH, JULIAN. *De Quincey Reviewed: Thomas De Quincey's Critical Reception, 1821–1994.* Literary Criticism in Perspective Series. Columbia, S.C.: Camden House, 1997. Pp. viii + 179. $55.95.

This volume examines changing trends in critical attitudes toward De Quincey, from accounts of the author as "ruined genius" in the 1830s and 1840s to recent studies from the 1990s by John Barrell, Josephine McDonagh, and Nigel Leask.

O'FARRELL, MARY ANN. *Telling Complexions: The Nineteenth-Century English Novel and the Blush.* Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1997. Pp. x + 182. $49.95 cloth, $16.95 paper.

Pursuing its original topic through novels by Austen, Gaskell, Dickens, and George Eliot, O'Farrell analyzes two main "attractions of the blush for writing": as an "event of the body" and as an "act of interpretation." Between the two, O'Farrell argues, the blush marks a convergence between the body and writing, and its "hybrid allure" places special demands upon the interpretive capacities of the novel. Although focused mostly on nineteenth-century fictions, *Telling Complexions* considers its findings in relation to more recent works like Salman Rushdie's *Shame*, while remarking wittily on how the spate of 1990s films adapting Austen's fictions—notably *Clueless*—clearly reveals that the dual lineage of the blush lives with us still.

PASCOE, JUDITH. *Romantic Theatricality: Gender, Poetry, and Spectatorship.* Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1997. Pp. xx + 251. $39.95.

Drawing together recent critical concerns with English Romantic women writers, theories of gender performance, and the cultural meanings of theatricality, this elegant and far-reaching study examines various poetic recognitions that subjectivity was a matter of intricate staging, whether in the theater itself, in the courtroom, or on the streets of the metropolis. The engaging opening chapter explores how actress Sara Siddons was championed by noted women poets like Mary Robinson in an attempt to erase the taint associated with female professional identity. This lays the ground for the subsequent thoughtful explorations of Amelia Opie's insights into the trials against political radicals as distinctly theatrical acts, the role of women in Della Cruscan verse, Charlotte Smith's fascination with Marie Antoinette, and Benjamin Robert Haydon's paintings consecrating Wordsworth's public persona. The sheer breadth of Pascoe's impressive research gives a very full sense of how poets and poetry found both their gendered subjectivities and their work caught up in literal and metaphorical modes of theatricalization.

PFAELZER, JEAN. *Parlor Radical: Rebecca Harding Davis and the Origins of American Social Realism*. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1996. Pp. ix + 282. $29.95.

Too little attention has been paid to Davis, one of the most interesting nineteenth-century writers, whose desire as early as the 1860s "to dig into this commonplace, this vulgar American life, and see what is in it" significantly changed the role of serious fiction in an emerging national consciousness following the Civil War. This present volume provides an extended commentary of impressive critical sophistication and historical insight to Pfaelzer's earlier *The Rebecca Harding Davis Reader: "Life in the Iron Mills," Selected Fiction, and Essays* (1995), furnishing the modern reader with one of the most valuable guides available to the life and work of an author who urged her contemporaries to write "the inner life and history of their time with a power which shall make that time alive for future ages"—a challenge she proved herself worthy of in her stories, especially those of women and children.

RAINSFORD, DOMINIC. *Authorship, Ethics, and the Reader: Blake, Dickens, Joyce*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997. Pp. xiv + 250. $45.

This study is mainly devoted to an analysis of "an ethically motivated reluctance to deceive" apparent in works by Blake and Dickens. Some of the critical judgments are intriguing, not least the view that "among Dickens's later novels *Our Mutual Friend* counts as another very flat book." Rainsford's conclusion extends his insights into "authorial control and authorial subjection" by focusing on recent debates about deconstruction, especially in relation to Jacques Derrida's *Glas*.

REEVE, N. H., ed. *Henry James: The Shorter Fiction: Reassessments*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997. Pp. x + 213. $49.95.

An important collection of eleven essays that provides a distinguished list of contributors (including Millicent Bell, Barbara Hardy, Philip Horne, Tony Tanner, and William Veeder) an opportunity to focus their attention upon a few of James's shorter tales. In the words of the editor, "The contributors have been bound neither to a collective focus nor to a collective method. They share little but the enthusiasm for their subject."

RIGNALL, JOHN, ed. *George Eliot and Europe.* Warwick Studies in the European Humanities Series. Brookfield, Vt.: Scolar Press, 1997. Pp. xii + 239. $59.95.

The exceptionally brief introduction to this collection observes that it would be a mistake to assume that George Eliot's fictions were dominated by English provincialism. Noting the novelist's expansive responses to ancient and modern European culture—from Theophrastus to the German Higher Criticism—Rignall points out that the contributors to this volume enrich our knowledge of George Eliot's differing responses to the cultures of France, Germany, Italy, and Spain. Among the established scholars here are Elizabeth Deeds Ermarth, Barbara Hardy, and Tom Winnifrith, and the topics covered include George Eliot's readings of Victor Hugo's *Les Misérables* and Mme de Staël's *Corinne.*

RIMMON-KENAN, SHLOMITH, LEONA TOKER, and SHULI BARZILAI, eds. *Rereading Texts / Rethinking Critical Presuppositions: Essays in Honour of H. M. Daleski.* Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1997. Pp. 350. $51.95 paper.

Instead of "foregrounding the theoretical framework and subordinating literary texts to it," this collection of essays seeks "to use literature as—in some sense—a 'source' for theory." Among the well-known contributors are Barbara Hardy (on *Jude the Obscure*), Robert M. Polhemus (on *Finnegans Wake*), Regenia Gagnier (also on *Jude the Obscure*), and James Kincaid (on *Martin Chuzzlewit*).

ROBERTS, ADAM, ed. *Robert Browning.* The Oxford Authors Series. New York: Oxford University Press, 1997. Pp. xxxii + 828. $65 cloth, $19.95 paper.

Includes the text of many of Browning's longer poems (*Pauline, Pippa Passes,* "Bishop Blougram's Apology") as well as three books from *The Ring and the Book.* Over eighty shorter poems, the "Essay on Shelley" (Browning's only significant piece of critical writing), and a generous selection from Browning's correspondence complete this useful edition. Daniel Karlin wrote the introduction for the volume, and the text of the poems is in most instances that of the "fourth and complete edition" of Browning's *Poetical Works* (1888–89).

ROBERTS, ADAM. *Robert Browning Revisited.* Twayne's English Authors Series, no. 530. New York: Twayne Publishers, 1996. Pp. xii + 177. $24.95.

Addressing almost all of Browning's voluminous canon, Roberts's informative account will help students understand some of the complexities of a poetic career lasting well over fifty years. The select annotated bibliography offers sensible judgments on the critical materials that throw the most interesting light on Browning's experimentation with form, his cultural context, and his religious outlook.

ROBERTS, NEIL. *Meredith and the Novel.* New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997. Pp. viii + 286. $55.

Taking its critical lead from Soviet formalist inquiries into the heteroglossic potentialities of the novel, Roberts's study sets out to show that Meredith the "master stylist is above all a master of style, whose creative genius is inseparable from an acute critical awareness of the ideological character of language and a remarkable capacity to combine discourses in the mutually illuminating ways that Bakhtin termed 'dialogic.'" Devoting individual chapters to each of Meredith's major novels, Roberts makes a strong case for both the cultural significance and the narrative innovations of this underappreciated writer.

ROBERTSON, LINDA K. *The Power of Knowledge: George Eliot and Education.* University of Kansas Humanistic Studies Series, vol. 61. New York: Peter Lang, 1997. Pp. viii + 191. $43.95.

Arguing that "the significance of a sound education is an important but generally overlooked theme" in George Eliot's writings, this concise study dedicates short chapters to such matters as the education of the working-class man (*Felix Holt*), university training (*Middlemarch*, *Daniel Deronda*), professional skills (Lydgate's medical practice), and inadequacies in the education of young women (notably Eppie in *Silas Marner*). These analyses are placed in the broader context of educational debates that absorbed George Eliot's contemporaries like Barbara Leigh Smith Bodichon.

ROE, NICHOLAS. *John Keats and the Culture of Dissent.* Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997. Pp. xx + 315. $75.

"In this book," writes the author, "I have set out to restore the vivacious, even pugnacious, voices of Keats's poetry, seeking in particular to trace those frequently unstraightforward ways in which his poems responded to and addressed matters of the moment." Attempting to provide a fresh synthesis of close attentive readings and historically informed analyses, Roe examines the poet's relations to three related areas: the dissenting culture of Charles Cowden Clarke and the Enfield Academy; the journalism, poetry, and political activism of Leigh Hunt; and the radical medicine of Astley Cooper and John Thelwall. In scrutinizing the radical culture influencing Keats's development as a poet, this detailed study may well be interpreted as a counter-reading to Marjorie Levinson's *Keats's Life of Allegory: The Origins of a Style* (1988), which Roe claims has been a "valuable stimulant" to his own research.

SCOTT, WALTER. *Redgauntlet.* Edited by G. A. M. Wood with David Hewitt. The Edinburgh Edition of the Waverley Novels, vol. 17. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1997. Pp. xviii + 540. $47.50.

This definitive edition contains a fully documented "Essay on the Text" that provides both an informative account of the composition, proof correction, and publication of *Redgauntlet* and clear justification for the many decisions on the copytext made by the editors. Editorial judgments can be assessed in light of the thorough "Emendation List," which amounts to some thirty pages. Equipped with comprehensive explanatory notes, the edition also features an exhaustive glossary.

SHELLEY, MARY. *Lodore*. Edited by Lisa Vargo. Broadview Literary Texts Series. Peterborough, Ont.: Broadview Press, 1997. Pp. 555. $12.95 paper.

This volume marks yet another excellent addition to Broadview's expanding list of literary writings that have long been out of print. Lisa Vargo's edition provides a detailed introduction explaining the long-delayed publication of what is arguably the least well known of Mary Shelley's novels. The five compendious appendixes contain materials illuminating the sources on which Shelley drew during composition, contemporary debates about Illinois and dueling central to the narrative, extracts from discourses on domestic conduct and female education, and reviews of the novel when it finally appeared in 1835.

SHOWALTER, ELAINE, ed. *Scribbling Women: Short Stories by Nineteenth-Century American Women*. Consultant Editor Christopher Bigsby. New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1996. Pp. xlii + 515. $50 cloth, $17.95 paper.

Few of the twenty-three stories in this anthology were ignored or even so undervalued in their own time as the editor at times suggests. Most of them were popular and critically respected and hardly representative of the work of that class of writers that Hawthorne privately denounced as "a damned mob of scribbling women." But this sort of misrepresentation will give our critical descendants something to carp about, and so we will keep our kind in business. Including some of the best work of Catharine Sedgwick, Elizabeth Stuart Phelps, Frances Harper, Harriet Prescott Spofford, Rebecca Harding Davis, Louisa May Alcott, Mary E. Wilkins Freeman, Constance Fenimore Woolson, Sarah Orne Jewett, Charlotte Perkins Gilman, Kate Chopin, Edith Wharton, Willa Cather, and Susan Glaspell, the selections are well edited, with interesting and classroom-useful critical apparatus. Both the Cather story ("*Paul's Case*") and Glaspell's "*A Jury of Her Peers*" were published in the twentieth century, but they otherwise seem not the least out of place.

STEPHEN, LESLIE. *Selected Letters of Leslie Stephen*. Edited by John W. Bicknell with Mark A. Reger. 2 Volumes. Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1996. Pp. xxii + 570. $130.

No attempt has been made to locate all of Stephen's letters, even with the help of Gillian Fenwick's *Leslie Stephen's Life in Letters: A Bibliographical Study* (1993); rather this selection is concentrated on letters to his close friends, to his family, to notable contemporaries, to representative contributors to the *Cornhill Magazine* or *The Dictionary of National Biography*, and to persons to whom he expressed views unrepresented elsewhere, the editor's desire being to "reveal Stephen in his professional capacity, his intellectual interests in so far as he mentions them, his state of mind about the world he inhabited, his private pleasures and anxieties, and his feelings and thoughts about himself, his friends, his loved ones and loved places." Nor does the editor attempt to supplant Maitland's *Life and Letters of Leslie Stephen* (1906), but rather merely to supplement that earlier compilation.

Storey, Mark. *Robert Southey: A Life.* New York: Oxford University Press, 1997. Pp. xx + 405. $39.95.

This definitive biography provides a precise history of Southey's role in English cultural life during the Revolutionary era and its aftermath. Storey's scrupulous and fair-minded readings of Southey's poetry helpfully reveal how works like *Thalaba the Destroyer* echo in Coleridge's "Kubla Khan" and Keats's *Endymion*, while well-known poems such as Wordsworth's "The Ruined Cottage" can be traced in part to Southey's *Joan of Arc*. The wealth of information in this major study shows not only Southey's influence upon major poetic developments in English Romanticism but also greatly enhances our understanding of the volatile politics of this period.

Timko, Michael, and Edward Guiliano, eds. *Dickens Studies Annual: Essays on Victorian Fiction, Volume 25.* New York: AMS Press, 1996. Pp. xii + 376. $64.50.

Continuing its dedicated work presenting some of the finest new Dickens scholarship, this volume contains seventeen essays along with a useful and very full annual bibliography for specialists in the field. Among the established scholars here are Joseph W. Childers, Winifred Hughes, and James Kincaid. Essays extend beyond Dickens's canon to include Ann Grigsby's discussion of Charles Reade's *Hard Cash* as well as Shirley Staves's inquiry into repetition and doubling in *The Woman in White*.

Twain, Mark. *Mark Twain's Letters, Volume 5: 1872–1873.* Edited by Lin Salamo and Harriet Elinor Smith. The Mark Twain Papers. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1997. Pp. xxvi + 939. $60.

The 309 letters in this volume, more than half of them never before published, are thoroughly annotated and indexed and are supplemented by a transcription of the journals that Clemens kept during his 1872 visit to England, book contracts, his preface to the English edition of *The Gilded Age*, contemporary photographs of family and friends, and genealogical charts of the Clemens and Langdon families. In addition, there are included eleven letters written between 1865 and 1871 and discovered too late for inclusion in the first four volumes. A matchless research tool, a source of endless pleasure and gratification.

White, Keith D. *John Keats and the Loss of Romantic Innocence.* Costerus New Series, no. 107. Amsterdam and Atlanta, Ga.: Editions Rodopi, 1996. Pp. xvi + 194. $40.50 paper.

Observing that Apollo appears in almost half of Keats's poems, White contends that the changing presence of this god yields new insights into the poet's creative process and purpose, especially in relation to the function of art. The succession of close readings aims to show Keats's transformation from a writer delighting in the sensual "native fire" of poetry into an altogether more mature author disillusioned by the "gilded cheats" of the imagination.

WILDE, OSCAR. *Oscar Wilde's "The Importance of Being Earnest": A Reconstructive Critical Edition of the Text of the First Production, St. James's Theatre, London, 1895.* Edited by Joseph Donohue, with Ruth Berggren. The Princess Grace Irish Library Series, vol. 10. Gerrards Cross, Buckinghamshire: Colin Smythe, 1995. Pp. 376. $60.

This brilliantly conceived and beautifully produced volume shows an expert textual editor combining his detailed knowledge of Wilde's manuscripts with copious documentation, illustrations, and photographs in order to give the fullest possible sense of the London premiere of *The Importance of Being Earnest*. Opening with an elegant essay on "The Play and Its Moment," Donohue proceeds to an exemplary account of "The Production Text" before moving to the play itself, where he furnishes Wilde's remarkable comedy with a more complete series of notes than has ever appeared in any previous edition. This truly outstanding volume sets the highest standards for research not just into Wilde's oeuvre but into performance history as a whole.

WOOD, JOHN. *The Photographic Arts.* Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1997. Pp. xiv + 191. $65.

Of particular interest to some readers of *Nineteenth-Century Literature* is the first piece in this sumptuously illustrated collection of essays dealing with historic photographic forms. The chapter "American Destiny or Manifest Mythology: Some Historical Considerations of the Western Image" examines the daguerreotypes that attempted to capture the California Gold Rush and the Westward movement in the United States.

JB
JW

Commentary

Following is an exchange between Alan Helms of the University of Massachusetts, Boston, and Hershel Parker of the University of Delaware, occasioned by Parker's article "The Real 'Live Oak, with Moss': Straight Talk about Whitman's 'Gay Manifesto,'" which appeared in the September 1996 issue of Nineteenth-Century Literature *(51:2), 145–60.*

Professor Helms writes:

A year ago in this journal, Hershel Parker attacked me because of a sequence of twelve Whitman poems called "Live Oak with Moss" which I had published in *The Continuing Presence of Walt Whitman*, a collection of essays edited by Robert Martin and published by the University of Iowa Press on the centennial of Whitman's death in 1992. My version of "Live Oak" differs from Parker's version in the Fourth Edition of *The Norton Anthology of American Literature* (1994), and Parker disapproves of my version, my title, and my interpretation. But before I respond, a brief history is in order for those who missed Parker's essay.

Sometime around 1858 or '59, Whitman copied out in a little notebook a sequence of twelve poems ("Live Oak with Moss" or "Live Oak, with Moss") that narrate the story of a love affair with another man—the most frank treatment of male homosexuality in all of his work. He never published the original sequence nor, as best we know, ever mentioned it, but he revised the poems slightly and included them among the forty-five poems of the 1860 "Calamus," where they appeared reordered and dispersed, their narrative erased. Fredson Bowers discovered the sequence in the early 1950s while working with the Valentine Collection of Whitman manuscripts now at the University of Virginia. Bowers published his amazing find in 1953 in *Studies in Bibliography* and again in slightly altered form in *Whitman's Manuscripts: Leaves of Grass (1860)* (1955). Although it's inconceivable that a newly discovered sequence by Wordsworth or Dickinson or Yeats would have received anything but clamorous attention, the Whitman sequence was largely ignored until I published my version, and then Parker published his, which brings us to the present.

Parker is wrong to say that "The first full attempt to read 'Live Oak with Moss' was Helms's essay in . . . *The Continuing Presence of Walt Whitman*." My essay first appeared in *American Poetry Review* months before *The Continuing Presence* came out, and with an introductory paragraph that Iowa Press asked me to write but that they didn't publish. Had Parker been aware of the *APR* essay he would have seen that some of his complaints are groundless. In any case, it's the later essay with my version of "Live Oak" that Parker rails against.

Parker has published the holograph versions from Whitman's notebook, whereas we published the poems as they first appeared in print. Parker is right in saying that I neglected to defend my choice, clearly a flaw in my essay. I chose not to publish the holograph versions because Whitman saw fit to revise the poems before publishing

them in "Calamus." My best guess is that Whitman was concerned with improving the poems, not with revising them in light of their new positions in the narratively incoherent "Calamus." In any case, revise them he did, so I presented them in the form Whitman himself gave them for publication. Since we'll never know Whitman's preference in the matter, it comes down to a matter of critical interpretation and editorial judgment. Parker is wholly mistaken in claiming that his version is the "Real" one and mine is by implication somehow false. The fact of the matter is that at present there are two versions of "Live Oak."

There are also two titles for the sequence: Parker's "Live Oak, with Moss" and my "Live Oak with Moss." Parker is furious about what he repeatedly calls my "no-comma 'Live Oak with Moss,'" "the no-comma text," and "'Live Oak with Moss' (without the comma)," but I chose the title on the authority of Fredson Bowers, who in *Whitman's Manuscripts* says, "It is significant in the extreme that the early heading for the series was Live Oak with Moss" (p. lxvii). Gay Wilson Allen, the dean of Whitman biographers, uses both titles, writing in *The Solitary Singer* (1967) of "Live Oak, with Moss" (p. 222) and in *The New Walt Whitman Handbook* (1975) of "a group of poems which Whitman at first called Live Oak with Moss" (p. 89). In other words, there's genuine confusion about the title, so Parker could have performed a service by acknowledging the fact and making a case for his title instead of claiming mine is eccentric and mistaken.

It's difficult to understand Parker's agitation over my version of the poems since he agrees that they were "altered . . . by minor revision." Yet in his attempt to explain the gulf between our interpretations, he says that he and I are describing journeys over "radically different terrain." So through some critical sleight-of-hand, "minor revision" results in "radically different terrain." But that's simply not so: our differences come from Parker's willful misreading of the sequence, a nice example of ignoring evidence that doesn't suit your interpretation. Basically, "Live Oak" narrates the poet's infatuation with another man, his being abandoned by his lover, his attendant shame and remorse, and his consequent transformation from a lover to a teacher of young men with desires like his own. Parker finds this unhappy sequence "confident," "ebullient," "liberating," and "ultimately triumphant"—a woefully misleading view, but that's another matter. In transforming "minor revision" into "radically different terrain," Parker's manipulation of language is of a piece with his title "The Real 'Live Oak, with Moss': Straight Talk about Whitman's 'Gay Manifesto.'" Since I'm clearly a gay critic and Robert Martin (whom Parker castigates for approving my version) is one of the best-known gay critics of American literature, the phrase "Straight Talk" is obviously working overtime—as if I've done harm as a gay critic that the "Straight" Parker is rectifying. Moreover, "Gay" is an anachronistic word for Whitman and his writing, and one might reasonably wonder how a sequence Whitman never published and, as best we know, never acknowledged can possibly be considered the "Manifesto" of Parker's title, or again, "a brave sexual manifesto." What would an unpublished manifesto be, and how can Whitman's suppression possibly be conceived as "brave"?

Parker's concluding imputation that my interpretation could harm gay teenagers is the most underhanded piece of slander I've ever read in an academic journal, and I'm amazed it found its way into print. And his alarm at this remote possibility is grossly exaggerated, considering that *The Norton Anthology of American Literature* has rather more readers than *The Continuing Presence of Walt Whitman*. Besides, since when is possible harm to readers a criterion of acceptable interpretation? I'm sure Parker has never entertained such a consideration in anything he's ever written.

But Parker is a slippery fish, as anyone familiar with the new first volume of his two-volume biography of Melville can attest—an exhaustive, exhausting book in which

conjecture repeatedly turns into "fact" without so much as a nod to evidence of any kind. In a recent review of that book in *The New York Review* (15 May 1997) Andrew Delbanco takes Parker to task for this misleading habit and he characterizes Parker's early chapters as "written with a striking combination of pity and contempt." In an article on Melville scholarship in *The New York Times Magazine* (15 December 1996) Philip Weiss says that Parker, "who's nothing if not proprietary," can be withering about others' views, and he quotes a Melville scholar who says about Parker: "I think he's a very angry man." It can't be a pleasant fate to be so constantly angry, but it should be possible in the name of scholarship to keep one's ire to oneself. For years I've heard people say that academics descend to the nasty and vicious because "the stakes are so small," but I never fully understood the point until I read Parker's article. He will be responding to this letter in the same issue, but for anyone interested in discerning the merits of our different versions and interpretations of "Live Oak with Moss," they're now in print. Regardless of what Parker or I have to say about the matter, readers can decide for themselves.

Professor Parker replies:

The only authorial text of the twelve-poem sequence "Live Oak with Moss" is the one Fredson Bowers discovered—the one Whitman wrote out neatly, heading the poems with consecutive roman numerals. The no-comma "Live Oak with Moss" published by Alan Helms in *The Continuing Presence of Walt Whitman* is *not* the sequence Whitman wrote; instead, it consists of the poems of that sequence as they stood, reordered and revised, in the 1860 "Calamus." Helms's choice of the "Calamus" texts may be an extrapolation from the "Rationale of Copy-Text" articulated by W. W. Greg, in which the editor adopts as copy-text the text last revised by the author, but Greg's theory of final authorial intention does not apply to poems that have been taken apart from a sequence and then shuffled, in revised form, among other poems, including many new ones.

I reaffirm my conclusion in the September 1996 *Nineteenth-Century Literature*: Whitman matters too much to let a spurious text drive out the real "Live Oak with Moss," particularly a nonauthorial text that (judging from Helms's essay and his new defense of it) asks to be read as a document dealing with "homophobic oppression." It would, as I said, be tragic if even one young person coming to terms with his or her homosexuality encountered Alan Helms's text "Live Oak with Moss" instead of Whitman's real text.

Granted, in my enthusiasm over the strength and coherence of the sequence I too hastily described "Live Oak with Moss" as a "gay manifesto," but I would defend it as a manifesto of tolerance and understanding in a culture that (as Helms's new statement makes clear) still very much needs it. We strengthen ourselves by acknowledging that the text that Whitman wrote, "Live Oak with Moss," can prove liberating to readers today, even though he did not publish it.

Granted, Fredson Bowers and other critics before Helms carelessly used the title Live Oak with Moss (without the comma). However, they applied it to Whitman's real poetic sequence, not to twelve poems altered for the 1860 "Calamus." *Only* Helms has ever attached the no-comma title to something other than Whitman's real "Live Oak with Moss."

Granted, Helms is right in saying that more people will see a classroom anthology than will read his text in *The Continuing Presence*; certainly there should be more readers of *NAAL* than of *American Poetry Review*, where Helms also printed his text, as

Live Oak With Moss" (no comma, the first letter of "With" capitalized). But Helms is wrong to minimize the impact of *The Continuing Presence*, self-described, and accurately so, as "the most aggressive gathering of essays" on topics related to Whitman's homosexuality. Many teachers (among them many critics who publish on Whitman) as a matter of convenience as well as academic responsibility will consult this momentous collection rather than a classroom anthology, and they will have no way of knowing that the text printed there is not Whitman's "Live Oak, with Moss." My article was called for precisely because Helms's essay (as printed in *The Continuing Presence*) would wield enormous influence and because important critics such as Robert K. Martin and Gary Lee Stonum had already endorsed it before I wrote (both of them under the false impression that Helms was talking about Whitman's "original 12-poem sequence," as Stonum wrote).

Helms's initial paragraph in *American Poetry Review* does not alter his argument in *The Continuing Presence*. Indeed, that paragraph promises that he will "explore a little-known sequence of love poems that Whitman wrote in the late 1850s and then suppressed," while in fact what Helms explores are twelve poems taken out of the 1860 "Calamus." Helms's confusion is basic, and, as I said in *NCL*, there "is nothing merely academic about the distinction between a correct text and an incorrect text of this Whitman sequence." Helms himself in 1992 as well as in his new statement pays a high price for reading a spurious text. In 1996 I sympathized: "'What a sad journey the sequence takes us on' (p. 191), he lamented after exposing what he found—a 'narrative of homophobic oppression' (p. 190). Helms was right," I emphasized, "about the miserable confusion he identified in the first poem of his text; my good news was that in Whitman's real text there was no confusion at all. (Whether or not there is confusion in the poem in 'Calamus' is a separate question.) By devoting an attentive reading to a spurious text, Helms was suffering needlessly." Still, my reason for exposing Helms's erroneous text was not primarily that it can have baneful effects on any reader, as it did on Helms, but simply that it is not Whitman's "Live Oak, with Moss."

Whitman never wrote Helms's "Live Oak with Moss" (or the title in *American Poetry Review*, "Live Oak With Moss") as a sequence, and we should forget the text in *The Continuing Presence* (and *American Poetry Review*) and get on with real work. Helms himself points the way by saying that the 1860 "Calamus" is "narratively incoherent." Whitman scholars need to rethink Bowers's efforts to date the dozens of poems written between the 1856 and 1860 editions of *Leaves of Grass*. Attention needs to be focused on the imperfection of Whitman's efforts to revise the "Live Oak" poems and place them in the 1860 "Calamus" cluster. Attention needs to be focused on his subsequent efforts to revise all of "Calamus" as a sequence, quite apart from the original twelve-poem sequence. In "'Live Oak, with Moss' and 'Calamus': Textual Inhibitions in Whitman Criticism" (*Walt Whitman Quarterly Review*, 14 [Spring 1997], 153–65), Steven Olsen-Smith and I further the liberation of criticism on "Calamus" by identifying and scrutinizing some still-closeted assumptions. There is exciting work to do. Saying so sounds strange even to my own ears, but study of "Live Oak, with Moss" and of the origins and revisions of "Calamus" (and "Children of Adam") has hardly begun.

The Nineteenth-Century Studies Association announces its seventeenth annual conference, "By Body Bound," to be held at the University of Alabama in Huntsville on 2–4 April 1998. The conference

will focus on cultural, social, historical, literary, aesthetic, political, scientific, and philosophical perspectives on the nineteenth-century body, from multiple disciplines. For additional information, please contact David Stewart in the Department of Art (stewartd@email.uah.edu) or Julie English Early in the Department of English (earlyj@email.uah.edu), both at the University of Alabama in Huntsville, Huntsville, Ala. 35899.

A multidisciplinary conference on "Theodore Roosevelt and the Dawn of the 'American Century'" will be held on 18–19 April 1998 at Siena College in Loudonville, New York. Subjects discussed in the papers include literature, art, education, Pragmatism, Progressivism, muckraking, military and naval history, American expansionism and exceptionalism, urban expansion and reform, immigration, and religion. Replies and inquiries should be addressed to Thomas O. Kelly, Department of History, Siena College, 515 Loudon Road, Loudonville, NY 12211-1462; phone (518) 783-2512; e-mail kelly@siena.edu.

The Hellenic Association for the Study of English announces "The Other Within," its third international conference, to be held on 7–10 May 1998 at Aristotle University, Thessaloniki, Greece. For further information, please contact Ruth Parkin-Gounelas, School of English, Aristotle University, 54006 Thessaloniki, Greece; fax (031) 99-7432; e-mail angath@enl.auth.gr.

CORRECTION. In the September 1997 number, in the essay "Representing Pickwick: The Novel and the Law Courts," by Jonathan H. Grossman (*NCF* 52 [2], 171–97), due to a printer's error (a 'bri-gune') the footnote at the bottom of page 193 was partially obscured. The full note should read:

"Property, Authority, and the Criminal Law," in Douglas Hay et al., *Albion's Fatal Tree: Crime and Society in Eighteenth-Century England* (New York: Pantheon, 1975), p. 22.

We urge readers to amend their copies accordingly.

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Wordsworth and the Polemic against Hunting: "Hart-Leap Well"

DAVID PERKINS

By Wordsworth's time perceptions of animals had been changing in England for more than a hundred years.[1] The new sympathy for animals was associated, of course, with a general reenvisioning of human relations to the natural world. In opposition to the opinion of Descartes, which had been widely accepted, animals were now thought to be capable of happiness and suffering, and to some persons their emotional life seemed more admirably intense than that of adult humans. Animals might be viewed as individuals, each with its own unique personality and life history. Moreover, animals had been endowed by nature with rights. Middle-class intellectuals, the main propagators of such ideas, often felt acute guilt at the suffering inflicted by humans on animals. Such sensitivities expressed themselves in the attack on hunting that began in England at least by the end of the seventeenth century and continues to the present.[2]

The motives for this polemic were not merely sentimental and humanitarian. Economic interests were involved and so were even broader issues of social status and power. The arguments against hunting focused on its cruelty, its economic

[1] For massive documentation see Keith Thomas, *Man and the Natural World: Changing Attitudes in England, 1500–1800* (London: Allen Lane, 1983), pp. 92–191.

[2] For earlier expressions of this sentiment, including medieval ones, see Thomas, pp. 151–54.

waste, and its anachronism, and implicitly they attacked
cial hegemony that was blatant in the game laws For h
was a legally protected, exclusive privilege of birth and v
of the governing class I cite Shelley's indignant eloquen
this theme the House of Commons, representing "no
the powerful and the rich," protects "a barbarous and I
sport, from which every enlightened and amiable mind s
in abhorrence and disgust Persons of great propert
ture animals on their estates for the sake of destroying the
that they may kill and torture living beings for their s
Most of the poets with whom readers would particular
associated Wordsworth—Thomson, Cowper, Beattie, So
Coleridge—were foes of hunting and condemned it i
verses So does Wordsworth in "Hart-Leap Well," his only
cant poem on the topic But his strategy testifies to self-d
and ambivalence, and this may seem surprising in a poet
proclaimed theme is the loving union of man and nature

In writing about the chase of a stag, Wordsworth focu
the mode of hunting that was most saturated with glamo
aristocratic and medieval associations, with baronial pag
and far-heard horns. The reality was, of course, rather
ent a male deer of about five years old was rousted o
covert and pursued by a yelling crowd of men and dogs
exhausted, it could run no more "At bay," it was torn to
by dogs or shot If it took to water, it might be overtake
rowboats, and its throat would be slit with a knife while
swimming [1] Nevertheless, stags were the largest and fas
the quarry that was pursued in England, and they had the
stamina and could be dangerous, at least to the dogs Wh
virtues of courage and endurance may be exhibited in hu
might most be seen in the chase of stags, and this of all
was most readily susceptible to an idealizing represent
Moreover, among the field sports, stag hunting was the
concern of animal lovers, for few stags still ran wild in W
worth's England They were to be found in some localitie

"On the Game Laws," in *The Prose Works of Percy Bysshe Shelley Volume I* e
Murray (Oxford Clarendon Press 1993), pp 280–81

[1] See Nicholas Cox *The Gentlemans Recreation* (1674, London Cresset Press
p 74

the more usual game were hares, otters, grouse, and foxes, and it was especially over foxes that the debate on hunting, pro and con, was joined.

Wordsworth might have seen stag hunting occasionally in the Lake District and on Exmoor in 1797–98, when he was living at Alfoxden. Simon Lee, the "running huntsman merry" of Wordsworth's poem, was based on a neighbor who had formerly been huntsman to the Alfoxden squires.[5] Probably Simon had pursued foxes, perhaps also hares and stags; the poem shows that Wordsworth was familiar with practices of hunting. The impoverished and secluded vale of Grasmere did not ring with tallyho' in Wordsworth's time, although John Peel, the fox-hunting squire of the famous song, was at Caldbeck, about twenty miles north of Keswick on the other side of Skiddaw. Wordsworth was a notable fisherman—to Shelley a notorious one[6]—but so far as I know, Wordsworth himself never hunted, unless we count snaring woodcocks as a boy. But hunting had a special meaning for his imagination. The famous skating scene in *The Prelude* pictures exhilarated vitality and associates it with hunting: on the ice the children imitated

> the chase
> And woodland pleasures—the resounding horn,
> The pack loud chiming, and the hunted hare.[7]

The boy was "Proud and exulting like an untired horse / That cares not for his home" (ll. 432–33).

See "Simon Lee," in *The Poetical Works of William Wordsworth*, ed. E. de Selincourt, 2d ed., 5 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1952–59), IV, 60; I, 6; IV, 412–13n.

In a footnote to "Peter Bell the Third," Shelley attacked Wordsworth for his description of a successful catch in *The Excursion*, Book VIII, ll. 561–71, quoting ll. 177–80 of "Hart-Leap Well" against their author (see *The Complete Works of Percy Bysshe Shelley*, ed. Roger Ingpen and Walter E. Peck, 10 vols. [New York: Gordian Press, 1965], III, 80n).

William Wordsworth, *The Prelude*, ed. Ernest de Selincourt, rev. Helen Darbishire, 2d ed. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1959), Book I (1850), ll. 435–37. In *Wordsworth: Play and Politics: A Study of Wordsworth's Poetry, 1787–1800* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1986), pp. 175–76, John Turner quotes from the 1805 version of the lines on stealing woodcocks (*Prelude* [1805–6], Book I, ll. 309–21) and he notes a comparison between the boy as a "fell destroyer" and Sir Walter.

"Hart-Leap Well" concludes with a "lesson",

> Never to blend our pleasure or our pride
> With sorrow of the meanest thing that feels.[8]

These lines ground sympathy for animals on their capacity to suffer, an argument that was frequently put forward in Wordsworth's time. Wordsworth's poem also urges kindness to animals as a religious sensitivity:

> The Being, that is in the clouds and air,
> That is in the green leaves among the groves,
> Maintains a deep and reverential care
> For the unoffending creatures whom he loves.
> (ll. 165–68)

Whether or not this Being is the God of Christianity, the point the lines make was commonplace in poems, sermons, pamphlets, and especially in literature for children. Coleridge's Ancient Mariner expresses a similar "moral" in completely orthodox terms.[9] The reminder that God loves *all* his children, including animals, was one of the strongest arguments in the campaign against cruelty to animals.[10]

Five years after "Hart-Leap Well" was composed, we find William and Dorothy Wordsworth on a hillside above Martindale. Amid the peaceful breathing of nature they were not perfectly contented. They liked "the quiet everyday sounds, the lowing of cattle, bleating of sheep, and the very gentle murmuring of the valley stream," yet "could not but think what a grand effect the sound of the bugle-horn would have among these mountains"—the tumultuous, warlike stag hunt with horses, horns, and hounds. They were glad that the bugle "is still heard

[8] William Wordsworth, "Hart-Leap Well," in *Poetical Works*, II, 254, ll. 179–80. Further quotations from this poem are identified in the text by line number.

[9] See "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner," in *The Complete Poetical Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, ed. Ernest Hartley Coleridge, 2 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1912), I, 209, ll. 613–17.

[10] See my articles "Cowper's Hares," *Eighteenth-Century Life*, 20, n.s. 2 (1996), 58–59, 62–65, and "Compassion for Animals and Radical Politics: Coleridge's 'To a Young Ass'," forthcoming in *ELH*.

once a year at the chace," though they felt sorry for "the poor deer."[11]

Wordsworth famously believed that "the human mind is capable of being excited without the application of gross and violent stimulants"; moreover, "one being is elevated above another, in proportion as he possesses this capability."[12] Wordsworth's momentary sigh for the "grand effect" of the bugle-horn represents a not uncharacteristic falling away from this ideal. If it is not a "craving" for "gross and violent stimulants," it is at least a slight dereliction from "the calm existence that is mine when I / Am worthy of myself" (*Prelude* [1850] II. 349–50).

In a passage of *Home at Grasmere* (MS. B) that is closely connected with "Hart-Leap Well," Wordsworth puts forward his own version of the Enlightenment plot of history as the moral progress of mankind. He says that when he and Dorothy were actually at Hart-Leap Well they foresaw in trance or vision a future era when love and knowledge will bring "blessedness To all the Vales of earth and all mankind."[13] He inserts their way of life into this historical vision by hoping that in their quiet Grasmere nook they may be forerunners. In other words, the sensitivity, imaginativeness, and reflectiveness to which they owe their happiness may one day be general human possessions. Both in this passage and in "Hart-Leap Well," the hunting of the stag functions as a reminder and symbol—a summary, as it were—of the old world that must and will be left behind.

Yet the old world strongly persisted in Wordsworth, and not only in transient nostalgias for hunting horns. He thrilled to stories of warlike prowess and glory. He was capable of an

[11] Dorothy Wordsworth, *Journals of Dorothy Wordsworth*, ed. E. de Selincourt, 2 vols. (London: Macmillan, 1959), I, 417. Wordsworth referred to stag hunting in a few other writings: "The Tuft of Primroses" (*Poetical Works* V, 354, 360, ll. 248, 301–2), "Miscellaneous Sonnets," no. 29 (*Poetical Works* III, 34), and "Hart's-Horn Tree, near Penrith" (*Poetical Works* III, 277). In these verses the attitude to the sport seems neutral or ambivalent. On three occasions Dorothy Wordsworth's *Journals* (I, 20, 350, 416) refer to hunters, including stag hunters, that she had met or had been told about. She makes no criticism of their sport.

[12] "Preface to . . . Lyrical Ballads," in *Poetical Works* II, 389.

[13] *Home at Grasmere: Part First, Book First, of "The Recluse,"* ed. Beth Darlington (Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press, 1977), p. 52 (MS. B, ll. 251–56).

almost berserk battle-joy, at least in imagination. Even in the peaceful *Home at Grasmere* he confesses that

> I cannot at this moment read a tale
> Of two brave Vessels matched in deadly fight
> And fighting to the death, but I am pleased
> More than a wise Man ought to be, I wish,
> I burn, I struggle, and in soul am there.
> (MS. B, ll. 929–33)

This is the side of Wordsworth that enabled him, as narrator, to sympathize with the emotions of the hunter, Sir Walter, in the first section of "Hart-Leap Well." No one has seen this identification more clearly than Don H. Bialostosky, and I quote from his analysis: the narrator's

> references to "that glorious day,' "this glorious act,' "a joyful case,' and 'that darling place" assume his hero's attitudes toward the events of the hunt without explicitly distinguishing them from his own. . . . he sympathizes with and in part resembles the Sir Walter he invents. . . . Only if we have seen that the narrator's character and sympathies are as evident in the first part of this poem as in the last will we recognize this motive in his moral and appreciate the need he has to utter it.[14]

In the plot of "Hart-Leap Well" a medieval stag hunt lasts so long that all but one of the hunters are left behind, the dogs fall away or die of exhaustion, and Sir Walter is using up his third horse when the stag, after three prodigious bounds from the top of a hill, expires in a dell next to a spring. To commemorate this chase Sir Walter erects three stone pillars marking the final leaps. He provides a stone basin for the spring or well and builds nearby "a pleasure-house" and "a small arbour" (ll. 57–58). In the second part of the poem, situated in Wordsworth's time, the pleasure-house has vanished and the arbor remains only as four lifeless stumps of trees. The narrator, a passerby, sees the stones and hears from a shepherd the story associated with them. The well groans occasionally, the shepherd adds, and from this and other signs he concludes that the spot is ac-

[14] *Making Tales: The Poetics of Wordsworth's Narrative Experiments* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1984), pp. 90–91.

cursed. Though some say a murder was committed, the shepherd traces the curse to the suffering, which the landscape deplores, of "that unhappy Hart" (l. 140). The shepherd is sure that the curse will last till nature has effaced all of the memorials that Sir Walter erected—"Till trees, and stones, and fountain, all are gone" (l. 160). The narrator—there is no reason not to call him Wordsworth—then adds eloquent reflections (partly quoted above) on the Being that loves nature's creatures.

Commentaries on this poem in books and articles leave an animal lover in despair, for they show that if the poem seeks to instill compassion for animals, it was written in vain. "Hart-Leap Well," as I read it, is a political poem, an utterance in a campaign against hunting that was then taking place and still is. The chase, its practices, and the emotions it evokes in hunters are exhibited and criticized. More broadly the poem pleads for sympathy with animals. And animals themselves are a figure in the poem for nature in general—as is still the case in discourses today—so that the widest issue the poem raises is that of human relations to the natural world, whether mankind is necessarily egoistically closed and predatory.

The commentators generally do not share the poet's feeling for animals. According to John Jones, that the suffering creature is an animal rather than a human being allows Wordsworth to evade the problem of evil or, more exactly, to resolve it in an unsatisfactory way, "banging the big Pantheistic drum."[15] "A wronged human being would be another matter," Bialostosky agrees (p. 95). Because the "victim is an animal," says James H. Averill, "we do not identify with it." Averill thinks that "the main issue is not the morality of hunting but the morality of pathos in literary fictions."[16] For Geoffrey H. Hartman the poem is about modes of imagination; he sees a progression "from one type of animism to another: from the martial type of the Knight, to the pastoral type of the Shepherd, and finally to that of the Poet . . . from primitive to sophisticated kinds of visionariness."[17] The subtle argument of John A. Hodgson enmeshes

15. *The Egotistical Sublime: A History of Wordsworth's Imagination* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1954), p. 139.

16. *Wordsworth and the Poetry of Human Suffering* (Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press, 1980), pp. 222–24.

17. "False Themes and Gentle Minds," *Philological Quarterly* 47 (1968): 67.

the poem in the development of Wordsworth's religious fee ings.[18] For John Turner the poem represents the "democrat advance" from feudalism to the present moment when the po and shepherd can talk "in genuine interchange, for all the difference in class" (*Wordsworth: Play and Politics*, pp. 189–90 And so it goes. An animal lover suspects that had "Hart-Le Well," like other poems of Wordsworth, been about vulnerab humans—children, women, the mad, the poor, the elderly— interpreters would less reduce or ignore the creaturely desper tion it describes.

It was in the eighteenth century that "fie sports" first encountered the strong ideological antagonis that has dogged them, so to speak, ever since. By 1838 Willia Howitt, surveying *The Rural Life of England*, could write that "th charge of cruelty" is "perpetually directed against" hunters.[19] Intellectuals viewed hunters with contempt. William Shen stone's remark is typical of many then and since: "the wor may be divided into people that read, people that write, peop that think, and fox-hunters."[20] In *Don Juan* Byron, a pet keepe who wished to be buried in the same vault as his dog, quote one of Lord Chesterfield's several sneers against hunters, an he also made known his horror of fishing.[21] "I hate all fie sports," Byron said.[22] (Byron was a reformed character in th

[18] See *Wordsworth's Philosophical Poetry, 1797–1814* (Lincoln: Univ. of Nebras Press, 1980), pp. 75–82.

[19] *The Rural Life of England*, 2 vols. (London: Longman, Orme, Brown, Green, a Longmans, 1838), I, 63–64.

[20] *Essays on Men and Manners* (1791; London: Bradbury and Evans, 1868), p. 17

[21] See *Don Juan*, Canto XIV, st. 35, and XIII, st. 106 and n., in George Gordon, Lo Byron, *The Works of Lord Byron: Poetry*, ed. Ernest Hartley Coleridge, 7 vols. (Lond John Murray, 1900–1904), VI, 525, 513–14. Teresa Guiccioli reported of Byron, pe haps not reliably, that "the dread of treading on an ant makes him go out of his w (Iris Origo, *The Last Attachment: The Story of Byron and Teresa Guiccioli as Told in Their U published Letters and Other Family Papers* [London: Jonathan Cape and John Mur 1949], p. 87).

[22] George Gordon, Lord Byron, letter to Augusta Leigh, 14 December 1808, in *T Works of Lord Byron: Letters and Journals*, ed. Rowland E. Prothero, 6 vols. (London: Jo Murray, 1900–1904), I, 205.

respect. He had been a fox hunter in his youth, and he was twenty-six when he resolved to shoot no more birds [see *Letters and Journals*, II, 405].) For many poets, hunters were outside the circle of civilized sensibility. They pursue, Southey observed, "with an ardour and desperate perseverance beyond even that of savages."[23] In a common metaphor, especially effective when the precedent of Rome was so much in mind, hunters were said to be "barbarians." The reference was to coarse pleasures, rough manners, bloodthirstiness, and also to historical belatedness. Though hunters were generally gentry, social snobbery from the standpoint of modern refinement was deployed against them. Shelley, for example, deplored

> that absurd & unphilosophical diversion of killing birds—besides the ill taste of giving pain to sensitive & beautiful animals this amusement of shooting familiarises people with the society of inferiours & the gross & harsh habits belonging to those sort of pursuits.[24]

Above all, hunters were accused of cruelty. To summarize these attacks I quote an anonymous review of Peter Beckford's *Thoughts on Hunting* (1781):

> Air and exercise, the best pleas for the chace, may be enjoyed in a variety of rural exercises and sports which do not depend on the wanton abuse and torture of any living being susceptible of pain. We call upon the feelings of any man who does not avowedly disclaim all tender feelings, to attend to the treatment of animals as represented in the work before us, and then to lay his hand on his heart, and declare how far they agree with those sentiments we dignify by the term humanity.[25]

[23] Robert Southey, *Letters from England by Don Manuel Alvarez Espriella*, 3 vols. (London: Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme, 1807), I, 287.

[24] Percy Bysshe Shelley, letter to Thomas Jefferson Hogg, 22 October 1821, in *The Letters of Percy Bysshe Shelley*, ed. Frederick L. Jones, 2 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1964), II, 361. But Shelley had shot birds as a teenager (see *Letters*, I, [illegible]).

[25] Review of *Thoughts on Hunting*, *The Monthly Review or Literary Journal*, 65 (1781), 217. Cf. the similarly broad indictment of hunting in *Three Dialogues on the Amusements of Clergymen*, 2d ed. (London: T. Cadell jun. and W. Davies, 1797), p. 25: "the cruelty exercised both on the animals that pursue, and the animals that are pursued—the horse pushed to the last extremity—the hound trained to the chase with savage barbarity—and the wretched fugitive agonizing in the extremity of distress."

I do not suggest that these attacks were as frequent and sharp in Wordsworth's time as they became later in the nineteenth century. They were motivated by the new ethic of civilized sensitivity, sympathy, kindness, and emotional susceptibility and by the reforming sentiments this ethic inspired, and, like other humanitarian causes, they involved wider social antagonisms. The resentments of Methodists and dissenters against the establishment, the cultivation by the middle class of its own values in distinction from the aristocracy, and the separation of urban from rural culture all expressed themselves in tart comments on hunting. On the other hand there were, besides field sports, many other long-established doings that horrified animal lovers. Most of these were associated with the amusements or work of the lower classes—bull baitings, cock throwings, overdriving of horses, cruelties in slaughtering, farming, and cooking—and the lower-class "savages" were more alarming, repugnant, and defenseless than the hunting barbarians. Many of the reformers were clergymen, and therefore economically dependent on the gentry. And without the support of the squires in Parliament there was no hope of protecting animals through legislation. Such considerations somewhat inhibited the assault on hunting.

Much that was then written about hunting is still relevant and moving, but since the cultural contexts, social meanings, participants, methods, and technologies of hunting were very unlike our own, the arguments pro and con were often dissimilar. For example, the religious case against hunting would obviously sway more people then than now. For another example, hunting squires would have been astonished to read the modern defense of their sport in Ortega y Gasset, who maintained that a hunter escapes from civilization by activating "that part of himself which is still an animal."[26] *Field and Stream*, *Sierra*, and similar publications repeat versions of this analysis as true and justifying, but two hundred years ago it could only have been an argument against hunting. In fact, Nicholas Cox had typically warned, in his *Gentleman's Recreation* (1674), that 'there

[26] José Ortega y Gasset, *Meditations on Hunting*, trans. Howard B. Wescott (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1972), p. 139.

is great danger lest we be transported with this Pastime, and so our selves grow Wild . . . till we resemble the Beasts" (p. 3).

The pleasures of hunting were explained as more or less rational in the eighteenth century. Though it dates from 1838, the brief analysis by William Howitt is typical of the previous hundred years or more. The appeal, he says, lies "in the pursuit of an object, and the art and activity by which a wild creature is captured, and in all those concomitants of pleasant scenery and pleasant seasons that enter into the enjoyment of rural sports" (I, 67).[27] Sociability was usually also listed among the agreeables. The point of such analysis is that the killing of an animal, much less the infliction of suffering, is not the aim in hunting, not the source of its pleasure, but it is merely a casual adjunct, "which you would spare to your victim if you could" (Howitt, I, 67). But you could not spare the victim, for unless hounds killed, they would not be keen on the trail.[28] Since the pleasures in hunting are doubtless as various as human nature, those of outdoorsiness, society, and prowess may be all that some persons enjoy, finding them quite enough. But Ortega speaks of the "orgiastic element . . . the dionysiac, which flows and boils in the depths of all hunting" (p. 89). For those hunters who find their sport the most enjoyable of all occupations, who are absorbed by it and peculiarly alive while engaged in it, Ortega is surely right, at least in the sense that the source of hunting excitement must lie in an irrational strata of human nature. Wordsworth went beyond the analyses usual in his time in representing the irrational intensity of hunting's appeal.

The argument was still made that hunting has social value in schooling a military aristocracy, a point that had been doing

Another typical statement may be found in Francis Noel Clarke Mundy's poem *Needwood Forest* (Lichfield: John Jackson, 1776). The gifts of hunting, Mundy says, are health, excitement, triumph, and conviviality after the hunt (p. 38). He expresses some compassion for hunted birds and hares, but in Mundy's eyes a fox is a criminal: "Stern justice claims the life he owes" (p. 36). Opponents of fox hunting are fops, pedants and cowards (p. 38).

See Peter Beckford, *Thoughts on Hunting* (1781; Boston: Small, Maynard and Co., n.d.), pp. 129–30. It was also absurdly claimed that hunters must kill foxes in order to reduce their number, thus preserving the farmers' chickens. In fact the squires greatly augmented the number of foxes by creating habitat for them and by forbidding anyone except themselves to kill them.

service since Xenophon's *Cyropaedia*. Hunting instilled valor and familiarized one with the shedding of blood. In *Don Quixote*, when Sancho wonders "what pleasure can you find . . . in killing a poor beast that never meant any harm," the Duke replies, "you are mistaken, Sancho . . . hunting wild beasts is the most proper exercise for knights and princes, for in the chase of a stout noble beast, may be represented the whole art of war."[29] Just for this reason, a hunting woman—there were some—seemed anomalous. In nineteenth-century formulations, this traditional argument typically gets mixed up with ideas of manliness and effeminacy. John Cook, a Master of Foxhounds from 1800 to 1813, supposed that without fox hunting the "breed" of English manhood would deteriorate: "instead of the hardy, open-hearted, liberal-minded Briton, you would see nothing but an effeminate race," capable of shooting only "a tame pheasant."[30] Such arguments were effective for a while in Parliament against legislation to terminate the popular amusements of bull and badger baiting, dog and cock fighting. William Windham, in particular, maintained that such legislation would end the ascendancy of British armies and navies. To bolster the analogy of hunting to war, it was of course necessary to endow the animal prey with the strength, cunning, valor, and general nobility that would make it a worthy antagonist, and a great deal of cultural work, including Wordsworth's poem, went into this mystification.

The first canto of Sir Walter Scott's *The Lady of the Lake* (1810) is an example of such cultural work. Coleridge thought it "the poorest Paraphrase-Parody of the Hart Leap Well," or so he told Wordsworth,[31] and the chase in Scott's poem is as long and ruthless as is Wordsworth's, until only one hunter (King James incognito) and one dog remain in pursuit of the exhausted, sobbing animal. At its start the chase is described from the stag's point of view and in the end the stag escapes, but

[29] Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra, *Don Quixote* (1605–15), quoted in Beckford, *Thoughts on Hunting*, p. 8.

[30] *Observations on Fox Hunting*, new ed. (London: Edward Arnold, 1922), p. 101.

[31] Samuel Taylor Coleridge, letter to Wordsworth, October 1810, in *The Collected Letters of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, ed. Earl Leslie Griggs, 6 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1956–71), III, 291.

aside from these and a few other concessions to the feelings of middle-class readers, the attitude is traditional. The "noble stag" is compared to a "leader," a "Chief," and a "monarch"; the hounds are "foes", the hunt a battle or "silvan war," and chasing the beast wins glory.[32]

Hunting carried an aura of high social class. In Wordsworth's time the right to hunt was legally restricted to the gentry—more exactly, to persons who owned land worth at least £100 a year and to others of equivalent social standing. The rest of mankind were not allowed to take game even on their own land (if they had any, and even if the game were destroying their crops), and no one was allowed to market it. Some of the ritual of hunting, such as riding habits, made it an expensive sport. At a hundred or two hundred guineas, hunting horses cost about four times more than ordinary ones. These considerations, incidentally, explain why game was necessary on the socially competitive menu. Since, legally speaking, game could be obtained only by hunting or as a gift, its presence at dinner proved that one was or had friends of the hunting class.

Poems frequently figured hunters as "tyrants," a traditional comparison that goes back to Genesis 10, where Nimrod the mighty hunter was also a monarch. Animals are the hunter's helpless, victimized subjects, for obviously the relation between hunter and prey is unequal, since the one is pursuing and the other pursued. Because of the social privilege and inherent structure of hunting, attacks on it could be perceived as Jacobinical in spirit, as motivated by leveling animosity. Protests on behalf of animals could be suspected, often correctly, as covert appeals on behalf of the human downtrodden.

The cruelties of hunters that might be decried were not only to pheasants, hares, otters, foxes, and deer—the objects of the pursuit. Although the gentry might ride, the servants in a hunt might keep up on foot, like Simon Lee, who "all the country could outrun, / Could leave both man and horse behind" (*Poetical Works*, IV, 61, ll. 17–18). Dogs and horses might be forced to exhaustion, as happens in "Hart-Leap Well" (see ll. 7

Sir Walter Scott, *The Lady of the Lake*, in *The Poetical Works of Sir Walter Scott*, ed. J. Logie Robertson (London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1904), pp. 208–9.

23–24). In *The Chase* (1735) William Somerville has a long passage on a foundered horse in a fox hunt:

> In vain the impatient rider frets and swears,
> With galling spurs harrows his mangled sides;
> He can no more: his stiff unpliant limbs
> Rooted in earth, unmoved and fixed he stands,
> For every cruel curse returns a groan,
> And sobs, and faints, and dies.[33]

The training and running of dogs involved habitual flogging. The hearty Somerville, to quote him again, seems not sadistic exactly, but strangely without reluctance to inflict pain. The whip, he says, the huntsman's "brisk assistant," should "Bite to the quick" (II, ll. 115–17); the attitude toward hounds was perhaps similar to that toward schoolboys, soldiers, sailors, prisoners, and mad persons. In order to teach a puppy not to annoy sheep, Somerville suggests tying it to a ram. After the "panting wretch" has been dragged and butted awhile and lies "Stretched on the turf,"

> Then spare not thou
> The twining whip, but ply his bleeding sides
> Lash after lash, and with thy threatening voice,
> Harsh-echoing from the hills, inculcate loud
> His vile offence.
>
> (IV, ll. 151–56)

Hounds pursuing a fox must not let themselves be distracted by a hare. To prevent this, Peter Beckford suggests, one may occasionally throw a live hare into the kennel and whip the dogs as they approach it.[34]

[33] William Somerville, *The Chase*, in *The Poetical Works of Joseph Addison, Gay's Fables, and Somerville's Chase*, ed. George Gilfillan (Edinburgh: James Nichol, 1859), p. [illegible], Book III, ll. 118–23. In *English Country Life, 1780–1830* (London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1962), p. 207, E. W. Bovill mentions the "appalling tale of dead and foundered horses which marred every great hunt." Things improved for horses around 1800 when Lord Sefton, who was overweight, introduced the practice of bringing two or three spare horses to the field.

[34] See *Thoughts on Hunting*, p. 72.

The main object of poetic pity was the hunted beast. In John Denham's *Cooper's Hill* (1642), a splendid description of a stag hunt tells how the tired, forsaken animal resolves to stand, and then to fly, and finally plunges in despair into the stream but is pursued even there:

> But fearless they pursue, nor can the flood
> Quench their dire thirst; alas, they thirst for blood.[55]

A passage in Thomson's *The Seasons* (1726–30) recounts the growing sickness and despair of the hunted stag until it stands at bay:

> The big round tears run down his dappled face;
> He groans in anguish; while the growling pack,
> Blood-happy, hang at his fair jutting chest,
> And mark his beauteous chequered Sides with gore.[56]

Shelley compares Orpheus to a stag in the last moments of the hunt:

> As a poor hunted stag
> A moment shudders on the fearful brink
> Of a swift stream—the cruel hounds press on
> With deafening yell, the arrows glance and wound,—
> He plunges in.[57]

In "Hart-Leap Well" the stag experiences similar desperation and anguish. As a hunter, Sir Walter is engaged in what William Cowper described as a

> Detested sport,
> That owes its pleasure to another's pain;
> That feeds upon the sobs and dying shrieks
> Of harmless nature.[58]

Cooper's Hill, in *The Poetical Works of Sir John Denham*, ed. Theodore Howard Banks, Jr. (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1928), p. 85, ll. 305–6.

The Seasons, in *The Complete Poetical Works of James Thomson*, ed. J. Logie Robertson (London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1908), p. 140, ll. 454–57.

"Orpheus," in *Complete Works*, IV, 69, ll. 40–50.

The Task (1784), in *The Poetical Works of William Cowper*, 2 vols. (London: William Pickering, 1830), II, 76.

The sport afforded James Beattie's Minstrel, who was a prototype for Wordsworth in narrating his own autobiography, "nor vanity nor joy":

> His heart, from cruel sport estrang'd, would bleed
> To work the woe of any living thing.[39]

And the anonymous writer of a pamphlet called *The Hare* described hunting as "this falsely-cheerful barbarous game of death!" Hunters, this author said, "do but transfer the turbulence of their spirits from the croud [of cities] to the retirement [of rural groves], and, when they are wearied of engaging in conflict with their fellow creatures, they turn the tide of their ferocity upon the brute creation."[40] Samuel Johnson characteristically thought hunting "no diversion at all. . . . It is very strange, and very melancholy, that the paucity of human pleasures should persuade us ever to call hunting one of them."[41] The anonymous author of *Three Dialogues on the Amusements of Clergymen* (1797) summarized the opinion of many persons in Wordsworth's generation in holding that "to take the life of an animal" except in self-defense or for food is "absolutely immoral" (p. 47), and he granted animals what we would now call "rights": "Man regulates his actions towards his *fellow-men*, by *laws and customs*. But certainly there are laws also to be observed between man and beast, which are equally coercive, though the injured party has no power of appeal" (pp. 60–61).

Despite such precedents, the first part of Wordsworth's poem does not foreground the suffering of the stag or overtly protest against it, but rather it dwells on the tenacity, elation and triumph of Sir Walter. A contemporary reviewer of the

[39] *The Minstrel* (1771–74), in *The Poetical Works of James Beattie* (London: William Pickering, 1853), p. 14.

[40] *The Hare; or, Hunting Incompatible with Humanity: Written as a Stimulus to Youth towards a Proper Treatment of Animals* (London: Vernor and Hood, 1799), pp. 79, 81.

[41] Samuel Johnson, *Johnsonian Miscellanies*, ed. George Birkbeck Hill, 2 vols. (1897; rpt. New York: Barnes and Noble, 1966), I, 288 (cf. II, 170). Being asked his opinion of hunting, [Johnson] said, "It was the labour of the savages of North America, but the amusement of the gentlemen of England."

Lyrical Ballads remarked that "Hart-Leap Well" represents successively the passions of "exultation and pity."[12] Like many readers in his time, the reviewer was ready to enjoy each emotion as it is presented, without much striving to interrelate them. Had he said that the reader is made to share Sir Walter's exultation in order to be involved in his guilt, when pity makes the guilt apparent, perhaps he would have been closer to Wordsworth's intention.

For reflective readers, however, even Part I of the poem represents Sir Walter's emotions as morally questionable, most especially when he "gazed upon the spoil"—the dead stag—"with silent joy" (l. 36). The meanings of "spoil" connect war, plunder, and hunting, and the word also suggests, in this context, that something has been spoiled. The "silent joy" of Sir Walter irresistibly brings to mind the emotion of the boy in "Nutting" (1800), "Breathing with such suppression of the heart / As joy delights in" (*Poetical Works*, II, 211, ll. 22–23)—a sadistic joy before a helpless victim. The common, traditional argument against cruelty to animals had reference not to the pain of the animals but to the socially dangerous emotions fostered in the inflicter, and a representation of sadistic feelings, if they are what Wordsworth depicts, would tell against hunting. That the joy is "silent" suggests a psychological tension, which Sir Walter discharges by resolving to build his pleasure-house. Like Wordsworth himself on many occasions, Sir Walter desires to memorialize a spot of landscape with which his emotion is strongly connected, to make the place express his feelings.[13]

A pleasure-house seems a surprising way to commemorate a hunt and is the more improbable on a bleak, lonely moor. The improbability of the story might almost tempt one to believe, as Mary Moorman does in her biography of Wordsworth, that the poet actually heard from a shepherd the story of the

[12] Review of *Lyrical Ballads, with Other Poems*, *British Critic*, 17 (1801), 128.

[13] As Hodgson puts it in *Wordsworth's Philosophical Poetry*, Sir Walter "literally make[s] over the spot into a physical emblem of his pleasures and his pride" (p. 80). The analogy between the constructive, memorializing impulses of Sir Walter and those of Wordsworth as a poet is one source of several readings of "Hart-Leap Well" that interpret the poem as about contrasting types or uses of imagination.

hunt and pleasure-house.[44] However, in Wordsworth's long letter to Coleridge, 24–27 December 1799, describing the winter journey in which this meeting with a shepherd supposedly took place, Wordsworth does not mention Hart-Leap Well at all. In the *Home at Grasmere* passage that alludes to a "trance" at Hart-Leap Well, he says only that a hunted beast had died there. In his later note to Isabella Fenwick, Wordsworth says that an old shepherd "told us the story so far as concerned the name of the well, and the hart, and pointed out the stones" (*Poetical Works*, II, 514n). Thus only the poem tells of a pleasure-house, and the description of it in the poem is unsettled, as though Wordsworth had not imagined it clearly. Sir Walter calls it a pleasure-house, shed, cot, and mansion. The shepherd calls it a mansion, a palace, and a great Lodge.

Only two local histories and guides of Richmondshire mention Hart-Leap Well. These date from 1897 and 1908, and they describe it as a site one can visit, though it seems unlikely that they are each describing the same site as the other. Neither author saw standing stones, and both were disappointed in the unimpressive trickle of water. Since both authors quote Wordsworth's poem, it is reasonable to suppose that the poem led them to search the region for an appropriate spring.[45] The massive 1823 *History of Richmondshire* by Thomas Dunham Whitaker has no reference to a Hart-Leap Well and locates no former mansion where the later guidebooks would place it.[46] I do not know whether Wordsworth ever saw the stones or met the old shepherd, but the pleasure-house was surely an invention. Possibly it was suggested to Wordsworth by his memory of Chambord, mentioned in *Prelude* IX, 491, the hunting lodge rebuilt by Francis I where he enjoyed the company of his mistress.

[44] See *William Wordsworth: A Biography. The Early Years 1770–1803* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1957), pp. 454–56.

[45] See Harry Speight, *Romantic Richmondshire: Being a Complete Account of the History, Antiquities and Scenery of the Picturesque Valleys of the Swale and Yore . . .* (London: Elliot Stock, 1897), pp. 372–76; and Edmund Bogg, *Richmondshire: An Account of Its History and Antiquities, Characters and Customs, Legendary Lore, and Natural History . . .* (Leeds: James Miles, 1908), pp. 532–33.

[46] See *A History of Richmondshire, in the North Riding of the County of York* (London: Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme, and Browne, 1823).

As an invention, the pleasure-house is interesting. Wordsworth may have had in mind, as do many readers, the pleasure-dome in Coleridge's "Kubla Khan." Any building—a hunting lodge, a tower—might have commemorated the hunt, but only a pleasure-house would have associated it with erotic feelings. A common meaning of "pleasure-house" suggests this, of course, and Sir Walter underscores the suggestion. His pleasure-house is a "place of love for damsels that are coy" (l. 60); he "will make merry" in it with his "Paramour" (ll. 72, 70). To this day the pursuit and killing of deer is represented by both defenders and antagonists of hunting as a quasi-sexual experience, and the association of woman and deer is age-old in Western culture.[16] The first part of the poem is lavish with erotically suggestive imagery, such as the stone pillars and the basin or cup that receives the "living well." When Sir Walter, "too happy for repose or rest . . . gazed and gazed upon that darling spot" (ll. 45–48), the spot is literally where the deer lies dead, but no reader can ignore the connotations.

As he hunts the stag and then gazes at its corpse, Sir Walter enjoys emotions of prowess, power, dominance, pride, and grandiosity—in fact, he experiences so enhanced a sense of self that he feels invulnerable and immortal. He expresses the latter feelings by transferring them to the pleasure-house, which will last "Till the foundations of the mountains fail" (l. 73). Thus the description of the hunt, in Part I of the poem, expresses and evokes morally conflicting responses. Sir Walter is a figure of vitality, joyousness, courage, tenacity, cruelty, lust, egoism, and megalomania. The suggestions of solipsistic egoism are reinforced by the falling away, repeatedly emphasized, of Sir Walter's retinue (ll. 15, 25–28, 34), which leaves "a doleful silence" (l. 12) in the air. The situation of Sir Walter somewhat resembles that of Coleridge's Ancient Mariner—"Alone, alone, all, all alone" (Coleridge, *Poetical Works* 1: 196, l. 232). In both poems egoistic self-assertion expresses itself in killing an animal and is figured as solitude.

16. On this association see Marcelle Thiébaux, *The Stag of Love: The Chase in Medieval Literature* (Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press, 1974).

At moments in the narrative Sir Walter is compared to features of landscape—to a cloud (l. 2) and a wind (l. 17). He also is swift as a falcon (l. 11), and his horse shares his joyous excitement (ll. 9–10). These comparisons would be puzzling if the poem were structured on a simple dualism of man versus nature, pleasure-house (architecture, minstrelsy, dance) versus landscape, for the comparisons suggest that Sir Walter's motions and feelings also are natural. This simple dualism is mediated by another, however: that of past versus future (and present). The suggestion is that hunting and the emotions that accompany it were natural in the past but will not be in the future. Like "Tintern Abbey," *The Prelude*, and many other poems by Wordsworth, "Hart-Leap Well" presents a development of, or into, a state of higher moral sensitivity. The difference is that "Hart-Leap Well" locates this development not in the maturing individual but in mankind through history.

If Sir Walter represents the mentality of the middle ages, he is contrasted to the narrator, a modern poet. This person is fully able to include Sir Walter—that is, to understand and be stirred by Sir Walter's hunting passions. Yet the modern poet, more reflective, sensitive, and aware than Sir Walter, has no wish to hunt, because his insight and feeling connect him more sympathetically with nature, and in a deeper sense—with the "Being, that is in the clouds and air / That is in the green leaves" (ll. 165–66). This Being was always opposed to hunting, as we see in the refusal or inability of the landscape to flourish where the stag was killed. But mankind must develop sensitivity over time. If we applied the language of personal development from "Tintern Abbey," we might say that Sir Walter embodies "the coarser pleasures of my boyish days" and that the modern poet intuits and loves the life that "rolls through all things" (*Poetical Works*, II, 261–62, ll. 73, 102). Sir Walter is "proud and exulting," like the child skater in *The Prelude*. In a word, Sir Walter is boyish.

Wordsworth's two poems "To a Butterfly" offer a useful gloss. In "Stay near me—do not take thy flight!" (*Poetical Works*, I, 226) the speaker recalls that he and his sister would chase butterflies in their childhood. He was the hunter: "A very hunter did I rush / Upon the prey" (ll. 14–15). He was also a soldier

for in a conversation with Dorothy, William recalled that "they used to kill all the white ones [butterflies] when he went to school because they were Frenchmen" (Dorothy Wordsworth, *Journals*, I, 123). Dorothy, on the other hand, "feared to brush / The dust from off its wings" ("Stay near me," ll. 17–18). "God love her!" the speaker interjects, thus indicating that he now warmly shares her tender, loving attitude. In the other poem "To a Butterfly" ("I've watched you now . . ." [*Poetical Works*, II, 22–23]), the orchard belonging to himself and his sister (now adults) has become a "sanctuary" where butterflies are protected, so much has he changed since the "sweet childish days" (l. 18) when he was a hunter. The child-hunter is not in the least condemned in these poems; he is, in fact, indulgently remembered. But thanks in part to his sister's example and companionship, he has developed into a person who appreciates the beauty of the insects and sympathizes with their naturally happy existence.

As the second part of "Hart-leap Well" begins, the narrator, this modern, reflective poet, says that his subject matter is not of the adventurous kind just presented in Part I. Though Wordsworth avoids identifying this poet with the artifice of pastoral, it is fully appropriate that he should meet a shepherd and engage him in dialogue. The pastoral care of shepherds for their flock is about to be extended as a "deep and reverential care" for all animals.

As the shepherd tells the story of Sir Walter's chase, the narrative is governed by sentiments and strategies that were typical of contemporary discourse against hunting. The focus is on the stag, not Sir Walter. The suffering of the animal is emphasized, and includes mental suffering: "What thoughts must through the creature's brain have past!" (l. 141). The shepherd endows the deer with an individual life history, with a story that makes it interesting. This perception of animals owed much to the increasing practice of pet keeping in the eighteenth century. The shepherd credits the stag with quasi-human, wholly sympathetic emotions. For example, the shepherd suggests that

the stag returned to die at this particular spring because "he loved the place (l. 147). The stag might have been born nearby.

> This water was perhaps the first he drank
> When he had wandered from his mother's side
>
> (ll. 151–52)

Tear-jerking details fill two stanzas, rousing pity and indignation, so that the reader identifies with the deer and finds the hunter deplorable.

Negative judgments on the hunter are laid one over the other, and some of them are attributed to supernatural powers. Some persons, the shepherd reports, believe that the waters of the spring groan because a murder took place there. Literally the locals are wrong, but the suggestion is planted that the hunt is a murder. The poet, in his final stanzas, adds the weight of his deliberate criticism and also attributes his own sentiments to the Being in nature. Meanwhile, the site has long since made itself waste—"doleful" (l. 114)—and if the interpretations of the shepherd are correct, the landscape has thus signified its disapproval of the hunt. It may be noticed, however, that unlike Cowper and Thomson, Wordsworth maintains a sad, steady reflectiveness without anger against the hunter. This is appropriate to the poem because, unlike other critics of hunting, this poet is not frustrated and hopeless. The dell now looks like perpetual winter (l. 115), but a "milder day" is coming (l. 175) when nature will again "put on her beauty and her bloom" (l. 172) at this spot. Sir Walter's "monuments shall all be overgrown" (l. 176), and hunting will be no more.

Thus "Hart-Leap Well" may be read as another of the many poems by Wordsworth that begin in excited, maybe desirous emotion and end in reflective calm. In such poems the intense initial state usually involves troubling crosscurrents of anxiety, egoistic self-assertion, lust, fear, or guilt. The final calm is linked to a widened perspective, a more sympathetic, receptive state of mind, a deeper communion with the spirit of the universe. This is the plot of "There Was a Boy," of "Nutting," and of the episodes of bird snaring and boat stealing in the first book of *The Prelude*. In "Tintern Abbey" and *The Prelude* Wordsworth imposes this plot on his life history as a whole, and in the

poems "To a Butterfly," and in many others, he constructs the same story in a fragmentary way. The moment of headlong, passionate arousal lies in youth, needless to say. "Simon Lee" keeps the basic structure in which intense, transient vitality—Simon's days of hunting—end in deeper awareness. But in "Simon Lee" reflective insight is not granted to the aged huntsman but to the narrator, who hopes to find and foster it also in the reader.

What is problematic in many of these poems, and certainly in "Hart-Leap Well," is the acceptance of tranquility as Wordsworth represents it, as the more desirable state. For, as has long been recognized, the tranquility seems at times to imply unfeelingness or lifelessness and is occasionally compared to death. If the subject is human history, I suggest, final tranquility—"the milder day" of "Hart-Leap Well"—involves the vanishing of mankind from the face of the earth.

In commentary on the poem the meaning of "the milder day" is usually determined by reference to MS. B of *Home at Grasmere*, which uses the phrase and refers to the death of the stag at Hart-Leap Well. In *Home at Grasmere* the "milder day" (l. 238) is unambiguously a future time when, as we noted, "all mankind" (l. 256) will share the "blessedness" (l. 254) that the poet and his sister now know in Grasmere. In this state of mind one would not be a hunter, and when in *Home at Grasmere* it seems that a shepherd may have shot one of the wild swans, the idea is rejected as impossible. Whoever lives in this vale must feel "an overflowing love

for all
Which is around them, love for every thing
Which in this happy Valley we behold!"
(MS. B, ll. 275–78)

In the "milder day" of the future the relations of human beings with animals will presumably be like those in Eden.

Using this passage in *Home at Grasmere* to gloss "Hart-Leap Well," a reader might infer that in "the milder day" of the latter poem, mankind will have learned a "reverential care / For the unoffending creatures" ("Hart-Leap Well," ll. 166–67). The vanishing of Sir Walter, of his pleasure-house, and finally of all

trace of him might be a figure for the transformation of historical humanity, of "what we are, and have been" (l. 174), into a utopian humanity in the future. The sympathetic personalities of the shepherd and especially of the poet might be taken as evidence of man's spiritual progress since the days of Sir Walter and as proleptic of humanity in the future.

On the other hand, nothing in "Hart-Leap Well" requires or even strongly suggests this interpretation. Tremendous emphasis is given to the gradual effacing of Sir Walter, his fellow hunters, and his monuments. "Horse and man" of his retinue "are vanished, one and all" (l. 15), "Where is the throng, the tumult of the race? / The bugles that so joyfully were blown?" (ll. 25–26), "Till the foundations of the mountains fail," Sir Walter boasts, "My mansion with its arbour shall endure" (ll. 73–74)—the obvious irony imparts the opposite thought to the reader, "The Knight, Sir Walter, died in course of time" (l. 93), "the pleasure-house is dust" (l. 169), "These monuments shall all be overgrown" (l. 176). Since these "monuments" represent "what we are, and have been," it is natural to understand their evanescence as a figure for that of mankind.

The poet says that Nature

> leaves these objects to a slow decay,
> That what we are, and have been, may be known
> (ll. 173–74)

In other words, these reminders of Sir Walter are also reminders of the character, moral being, or spirit of humankind. Sir Walter is us. Nature, it seems, wishes to keep this reminder present, for since she "leaves these objects to a slow decay," there is an implication that she could efface them more quickly. Her intention, the poet says, is to make us known, but to whom and why are not declared. One could consult Wordsworth's "Essay upon Epitaphs" to see why monuments are preserved and memories kept alive—and this would greatly complicate the argument at this point—but without examining the "Essay," we can safely say that for Wordsworth the preservation of monuments implies love or reverence for the departed. One wonders, then whether nature can be suspected of a pious regard, at least for what we "have been"—all that vitality of Sir Walter. Or, quite

contrary to the spirit of the "Essay upon Epitaphs," does nature preserve these memorials of hunting and all that it represents as admonitions, wishing to keep before us our need to change? And, of course, whatever nature is thought to intend as a memorialist, Wordsworth's poem actually carries out.

After "what we are, and have been," one might have expected a reference to what we will be. Instead, the stanza continues:

> But at the coming of the milder day
> These monuments shall all be overgrown.
>
> (ll. 175–76)

Thus nothing is directly promised in the poem about what we will be or even *that* we will be. The promise is only that there will be no trace of what we are and have been, and that nature will itself persist and revive:

> But Nature, in due course of time, once more
> Shall here put on her beauty and her bloom.
>
> (ll. 171–72)

A reader might infer, then, that the "milder day" will be when humanity itself and all memorials of its existence have gone from the face of the earth. With this reading the poem expresses misanthropy—a typically Wordsworthian emotion, as many critics have emphasized. It is very difficult for a lover of nature also to be a lover of man, most especially when man, "what we are," is a hunter.

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Beddoes, Pygmalion, and the Art of Onanism

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I never conceived my private practice depleted
My creative energies: rather the reverse.
I sensed a peculiar, intimate, and vital
Connection between solitary vice and verse.
—Daryl Hine, *Academic Festival Overtures*

THERE appears to be an emerging consensus that the nineteenth century was the golden age for retellings of the myth of Pygmalion. The art historian David Freedberg comments on the increased popularity at that time of Pygmalion as a subject of literature as well as of painting: "in the nineteenth century, [the myth of Pygmalion] also had its most important (and possibly most inventively interesting) literary influence."[1] Freedberg cites Balzac and Zola; critics of English literature have cited Hazlitt, Browning, Rossetti, and Hardy, among others.[2] One version no one ever cites is "Pygmalion, or The Cyprian Statuary" (1825) by Thomas Lovell Beddoes, yet this version is one of the richest and

[1] *The Power of Images: Studies in the History and Theory of Response* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1989), pp. 340–42.

[2] See, for example, J. Hillis Miller, *Versions of Pygmalion* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1990) for a general look at Victorian adaptations of the myth; for studies of Rossetti, Hazlitt, and Browning, see Martin A. Danahay, "Mirrors of Masculine Desire: Narcissus and Pygmalion in Victorian Representation," *Victorian Poetry* 32 (1994): 35–53; and Catherine Maxwell, "Browning's Pygmalion and the Revenge of Galatea," *ELH* 60 (1993): 989–1013.

most powerful of all—and an important, if unacknowledged, influence on Browning.[3] Even the very few critics who have written on Beddoes have not had much time for 'Pygmalion'. Douglas Bush, for instance, speaks of it as a poem "which most of [Beddoes's] critics have united in ignoring," and he goes on to ignore it himself.[4] Yet the poem is important not only to Beddoes's own development as an artist (he was twenty-one when he wrote it) but also to debates—as current now as they were then—about the function of inspiration in the work of the artist, the idea of the Romantic poet as a solitary figure, and the role of sexuality in the narrative of masculine artistic development.

The story of Pygmalion has taken many forms but, at least in works before the nineteenth century, it is often read as a story of artistic and sexual triumph. Beddoes makes both of these kinds of triumph problematic. The sexuality of the artist in the poem is not directed toward the statue or an actual woman but back toward himself. In Beddoes's formulation, art, so often presented as a solitary activity in the Romantic period, becomes a form of that more popular solitary activity, masturbation. And in "Pygmalion" artistic activity is followed by the same "wasting conditions" believed to come from masturbation. Beddoes had approached the theme of artistic creation before, in his early poem 'Alfarabi'; in 'Pygmalion' he treats the theme more seriously, at greater length, and, by engaging with the versions of the myth created by Ovid and Rousseau, in a more consciously literary way. But by writing about masturbation, in however veiled a manner, Beddoes is also entering into an extended public discussion that had been going on for decades both on the Continent and in England, where one of the most prominent participants in the discussion was his own

[3] Several years after Beddoes's suicide in 1849 Browning was entrusted with the manuscripts of Beddoes's poems and letters. They languished in the so-called 'Browning Box' until they were rescued after Browning's death by Edmund Gosse and printed in 1894. Browning's possession of the manuscripts can be seen as a sort of guilty secret; no thorough study of the influence of Beddoes on Browning has yet been written.

[4] See *Mythology and the Romantic Tradition in English Poetry* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1937), pp. 193–94.

father, who died when the future poet was only five years old.[5] I want to look at both the medical and the poetic contexts for Beddoes's work before looking at the poem itself.

The older Thomas Beddoes was a famous and successful doctor with wide-ranging scientific interests who published on various topics. In 1802, the year before the poet's birth, Dr. Beddoes published a three-volume compendium of medical advice and educational theories called *Hygeia*. In Essay IV, "Essay on the Individuals, Composing Our Affluent and Easy Classes, Part Second," the section called "Grand Source of Unhealthiness in the Male Sex" deals, very discreetly, with masturbation and with the wasting away of the habitual masturbator.[6] In his biography of Dr. Beddoes, Roy Porter says that

> Masturbation became the target of many Georgian writers, who exposed it not just as a sin, vice, or character weakness, but as ruinous to health, because it supposedly induced wasting conditions. As reproductive biology increasingly conceptualized semen as a vital fluid, its onanistic waste was made to shoulder the blame for adolescent consumptions.[7]

In this respect, then, Dr. Beddoes's opinions on masturbation were the standard medical views of his time, although his focus in *Hygeia* is frequently what we would now call sociological rather than medical. Much of his remarkably well-written book is concerned with literature and its effects on the imaginations

[5] For a summary of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century writings on masturbation see Roy Porter, "Forbidden Pleasures: Enlightenment Literature of Sexual Advice," in *Solitary Pleasures: The Historical, Literary, and Artistic Discourses of Autoeroticism*, ed. Paula Bennett and Vernon A. Rosario II (New York: Routledge, 1995), pp. 75–98.

[6] See Thomas Beddoes, *Hygeia: or Essays Moral and Medical, on the Causes Affecting the Personal State of our Middling and Affluent Classes*, 3 vols. (Bristol: J. Mills, 1802), I: Essay IV, pp. 31–71, esp. pp. 42–43.

[7] *Doctor of Society: Thomas Beddoes and the Sick Trade in Late-Enlightenment England* (London: Routledge, 1992), p. 104.

of young men. As Porter points out, in *Hygeia* "onanism was a disorder caused, or exacerbated, by the suggestive, seductive power of language" ("Forbidden Pleasures," p. 87).

Dr. Beddoes's emphasis on the power of language which would perhaps seem strange in a medical writer today is typical of the man and of the milieu in which he chose to live. Dr. Beddoes was married to the sister of Maria Edgeworth,[8] he was a close friend of Coleridge, Southey, and Wordsworth, and he was himself a poet who had published a narrative poem on Alexander the Great. In his own career, then, Dr. Beddoes bridged the two worlds of science and art, at least partially. The younger Beddoes seems to have attempted to emulate his father by trying to transform himself into a doctor with literary interests. In terms of Beddoes's writing, for instance, an obvious connection can be made between his brilliance as an anatomist and his fascination with death and skeletons in most of his work—particularly in his play *Death's Jest Book*, a work that Beddoes began a few years after "Pygmalion" and that he never really finished. But, for various reasons, he was never able to establish himself as a medical man or, indeed, as a writer. The younger Beddoes can be said to have combined medicine and poetry largely by never achieving any material success in either.[9]

One of the things we can see in "Pygmalion," I think, is Beddoes's attempt to connect his own ideas about art with his father's work as a scientist. Unlike his son, Dr. Beddoes does not appear to have been especially interested in the nature and composition of the human body; rather, his concern was with the human in society, in combination with other humans. From this point of view, masturbation is particularly dangerous. Thomas Laqueur suggests that "the emphasis in the solitary

[8] The idea that people might fall in love with pictures is raised in two of Edgeworth's novels, *Belinda* (1801) and *Patronage* (1814).

[9] James R. Thompson quotes a letter written by Beddoes in 1827 in which he declares his preference of Apollo's pillbox to his lyre and his intention to reside in Göttingen instead of Grub Street (*Thomas Lovell Beddoes* [Boston: Twayne, 1985], p. 5). For the depressing story of Beddoes's attempts to find university work as a professor of anatomy or physiology and of his attempts to publish *Death's Jest Book*, see H. W. Donner, *Thomas Lovell Beddoes: The Making of a Poet* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1935).

vice should perhaps be less on 'vice,' understood as the fulfillment of illegitimate desire, than on 'solitary,' the channeling of healthy desire back into itself."[10] In nineteenth-century England, when achieving orgasm was referred to as "spending," desire was a natural resource that was intended to circulate in and contribute to the economy. To keep desire private was believed to cause the masturbator to waste away: the masturbator becomes a sexual miser and shares the miser's grim fate. Beddoes applies his father's views on masturbation to one of the most popular themes of Romantic poetry, artistic creation itself. Instead of concentrating, as his father did, on how certain kinds of literature can lead to masturbation, Beddoes makes a symbolic equivalence between masturbation and artistic creation. The fertility of the artist, who like the masturbator creates imaginary people and situations, is a poor substitute for the literal fertility of desire harnessed by marriage, which produces actual humans.

The connection that Beddoes makes in his poem can also be seen in a less explicit and more humorous form in Ovid's version of the Pygmalion story in the *Metamorphoses*. In *Versions of Pygmalion* J. Hillis Miller comments that "Ovid's description of the anthropomorphizing of Galatea strongly emphasizes the autoerotic side of this process" (p. 6). Pygmalion creates a sculpture of a woman more beautiful than any real woman and falls in love with his handiwork. Ovid concentrates on the details of Pygmalion's obsession with the statue—how he fondles it, kisses it, brings it presents, and dresses it.[11] As if to emphasize how bizarre Pygmalion's behavior is, Ovid here reverses the usual sequence of events behind the narratives of Roman (and other) love poetry, describing a sort of striptease in reverse. Pygmalion prays to Venus for help and eventually finds that his prayers have been answered.

[10] *Making Sex: Body and Gender from the Greeks to Freud* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1990), p. 229.

[11] See Ovid, *Metamorphoses Books IX–XV*, ed. and rev. G. P. Goold, trans. Frank Justus Miller, 2d ed. (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1984), p. 84, Book 10, ll. 254–55, 256, 259–60, 263.

oraque tandem
ore suo non falsa premit, dataque oscula virgo
sensit et erubuit timidumque ad lumina lumen
attollens pariter cum caelo vidit amantem
(Book X, ll. 291–94)[12]

At the beginning of the episode Pygmalion rejected real women because he was "offensus vitiis, quae plurima menti / femineae natura dedit" (Book X, ll. 244–45);[13] at the end he is rewarded with a woman who is perfect because she is made by art, not nature, and who identifies him, as Ovid's phrasing makes clear, with heaven itself. Ovid suggests that a fantasy object is better than a real person and that we prize art because it enables us to live in the world of the masturbatory fantasy; the episode thus seems to insist on the identification of artistic conceptions with masturbatory fantasies.[14]

The popularity of Ovid's version meant that Beddoes had a vast number of later treatments of the myth to consider. One version that we know he admired was Rousseau's *Pygmalion, scène lyrique* (written 1762). Shortly after finishing 'Pygmalion' Beddoes wrote to a friend, 'Don't look at J. J. Rousseau — this is much better because prose.'[15] Unlike Donner, who does not see the reference as important, Douglas Bush did see Rousseau as an influence on Beddoes: 'Though Beddoes went much beyond Rousseau's "Pygmalion," I think he owed somewhat more to it than Mr. Donner admits' (p. 194, n. 57). Rousseau is significant to my reading of Beddoes not only because of his

12 [He] pressed with his lips real lips at last. The maiden felt the kisses, blushed and, lifting her timid eyes up to the light, she saw the sky and her lover at the same time. (Loeb translation)

13 Disgusted with the faults which in such full measure nature had given the female mind. (Loeb translation)

14 In *The Anatomy of Melancholy* (1621) Robert Burton includes Pygmalion in a long list in Latin of incidents of bestiality, sodomy, and other practices. The reference to Pygmalion is preceded by a reference to necrophilia and followed by other examples of people who lusted after images (see *The Anatomy of Melancholy*, ed. Thomas C. Faulkner, Nicolas K. Kiessling, and Rhonda L. Blair, 3 vols. [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989–94], III, 50–51; Part 3, Sec. 2, Memb. 1, Subs. 2).

15 Letter to T. F. Kelsall, 24 April 1825, quoted in Donner, p. 74.

play but also because of the fact that he was one of the mo prominent figures in the discussion on masturbation. In a fa mous passage in the *Confessions* Rousseau says that as a youth h learned "ce dangereux supplément qui trompe la nature e sauve aux jeunes gens de mon humeur beaucoup de désordre aux dépends de leur santé, de leur vigueur et quelquefois d leur vie", he goes on to state that masturbation is very attractiv for those with lively imaginations[16] In many respects conven tional, Rousseau's comments link masturbation and artistic ac tivity both art and masturbation deceive nature, and both ar the results of a particularly vivid imagination Rousseau's view on the dangers of masturbation turn up in many of his work but they are particularly effectively presented in his version o Pygmalion

When Rousseau's play begins, Pygmalion has already cre ated the sculpture called Galatea He sees his love for the statu as love for himself "je ne puis me lasser d'admirer mon ou vrage, je m'enivre d'amour-propre; je m'adore dans ce que j'a fait"[17] Like masturbation, the statue is at odds with natur "Non jamais rien de si beau ne parut dans la nature, j'ai pass l'ouvrage des Dieux" (p 1,226),[18] Pygmalion later refers t the statue as "cet affront à la nature" (p 1,229, "this affron to nature") Rousseau's Galatea is a material manifestation o the dangerous and unnatural fantasies against which Roussea warns his readers in the *Confessions*, and Pygmalion eventuall sees his love of his handiwork as a sign of madness "Je crois, dan mon délire, pouvoir m'élancer hors de moi; je crois pouvoir lu donner ma vie, et l'animer de mon ame! Ah! que Pygmalio

[16] *Les Confessions de J J Rousseau*, in *Oeuvres Complètes* ed Bernard Gagnebin an Marcel Raymond, 4 vols (Paris Gallimard 1959–1969), I 109 ("this dangerous sup plement which deceives nature and at the expense of their health their vigor an sometimes of their lives saves youths like me from much confusion [my translation] For a discussion of French attitudes toward sexuality with special emphasis on mastur bation and on Rousseau see Vernon A Rosario II "Phantastical Pollutions The Publ Threat of Private Vice in France," in *Solitary Pleasures*, pp 101–30

[17] *Pygmalion scène lyrique*, in *Oeuvres Complètes* II 1,226 ("I never tire of admirin my work, I am becoming drunk with self-love, I adore myself in what I have done [m translation]) All further translations of 'Pygmalion' are my own

[18] "Nothing so beautiful has ever appeared in nature I have surpassed the work o the gods

même pour vivre dans Galathée!" (p. 1,228).[19] The statue is presented here as a product expelled by force ("élancer") from the body, like seminal discharge. Its continued existence in the world appears to be dependent on the death of its creator.

Pygmalion instantly retreats from this position and asks that both he and his statue may live, but the suggestion that a fantasy, once embodied, takes the life of its creator is not effaced. In any case, the ending of the play makes it difficult to see the two as separate and individual. Galatea has only four lines: "Moi" and "C'est moi" ("me, it is I") when she touches herself, "Ce n'est plus moi" ("It is no longer I") when she touches a statue, and "Ah! encore moi" ("Ah, still me") when she touches Pygmalion (pp. 1,230–31). Louis Marin points out that "dans une parole et un geste originaires, Galathée exhibe à son Auteur 'son' origine auto-érotique."[20] Galatea's lines suggest the distinction to be made between the sculptor and the sculpted, only to blur it. They also suggest that knowledge of oneself comes from touching oneself: the sense of touch rather than the sense of sight is essential to perception of oneself and of the world around one. The play ends when Pygmalion says "C'est toi, c'est toi seule: je t'ai donné tout mon être; je ne vivrai plus que par toi" (p. 1,231).[21] Rather than the happy couple of Ovid's version (and most other versions as well), Rousseau gives us a shift in power, the absorption of the artist into his creation. Rousseau qualifies Ovid's happy ending by refusing to make the narrative transition from masturbation to heterosexual marriage. Beddoes was to go even further.

In one of the best treatments of Beddoes's work ever published, Northrop Frye remarks:

[19] In my delirium I think I can shoot out of myself. I think I can give her my life and animate her with my soul! Ah, let Pygmalion die in order to live in Galatea.

[20] "Le moi et les pouvoirs de l'image: Glose sur *Pygmalion, scène lyrique* (1772) de J.-J. Rousseau," *Modern Language Notes* 107 (1992): 672. ("Galatea exhibits her auto-erotic origin to her Author by an originary speech and gesture" [my translation].)

[21] It is you, it is you alone. I have given you all my being. I shall no longer live except through you.

> What Beddoes contributes to Romanticism is, perhaps, the most complete and searching poetic reaction to the Romantic sense of the limitations of ordinary experience. The shadow of Kant's riddle falls across the whole Romantic movement. The world that we see and understand is not the noumenon, the world in itself, but only the world as phenomenon, as adapted to our categories of perception and reasoning. . . . The Romantic sense of something outside ordinary experience which nevertheless completes experience, symbolized by "nature" in Wordsworth and elsewhere, must be something mysterious, because it cannot be directly apprehended.[22]

According to Frye, the Romantic poet searches for something to bridge the gap between the world we experience through our senses and the intangible, invisible world that is felt to surround us; Beddoes implies that such a search is doomed to failure because even in our perception of reality or our artistic conceptions we are trapped in our minds, which have already been trained. E. H. Gombrich makes a similar point in his study of realism and representation: "There is no neutral naturalism. The artist, no less than the writer, needs a vocabulary before he can embark on a 'copy' of reality."[23] Thus, the artistic conception that results in a poem (or a sculpture) is a closed system that reproduces the phenomenon as it is apprehended by a particular mind.

These issues are central to many of the more famous Romantic poets. Much recent criticism has focused on this issue in Shelley's work, for example, and we should recall that Shelley was Beddoes's favorite of the Romantic poets. Karen A. Weisman sees *Alastor* as the start

> of Shelley's life-long fear of solipsism, of the subjectivity that causes projected fictions to take the place of the very objective reality one seeks to define. In *Alastor*, a poet/questor consumes himself into annihilation by over-indulging his desire to transcend the spiritual aridity which, he believes, is the defining feature of the mutable world.[24]

[22] *A Study of English Romanticism* (New York: Random House, 1968), p. 84.

[23] *Art and Illusion: A Study in the Psychology of Pictorial Representation* (New York: Pantheon, 1960), p. 87.

[24] *Imageless Truths: Shelley's Poetic Fictions* (Philadelphia: Univ. of Pennsylvania Press, 1994), p. 21.

Weisman sees a similar process at work in "Mont Blanc," where Shelley "comprehends a sense of power inherent in the grandeur of the mountain, so that he can then virtually forget the mountain" (p. 56). Thus, attempts to create a better world as well as attempts to celebrate the beauty of this world (both ways in which poets seek to transcend the limitations that Frye mentions) lead to an imprisonment in the poetic construct itself, and as we see in *Alastor*, this imprisonment is ultimately fatal. Furthermore, even romantic love cannot provide the poet with a vital connection to the world in which he lives. Laura Claridge says that in *Alastor* "Shelley's love object, his epipsyche, is predicated on such a polished mirror of the self that he experiences, even *through* love, the excess of self that leads to death."[19] Within the poetic frame, then, even romantic love becomes a sort of masturbation as the poet is trapped in his solipsism.

The connection between Romantic poetry and masturbation has been made most forcefully by Marjorie Levinson in her book on Keats, in which she identifies masturbation as a theme in Keats's poetry. For instance, she sees the Knight in "La Belle Dame Sans Merci" as corresponding in some ways to the typical masturbator from medical discourse, of which Keats, as a medical student, would have been aware.[20] As Levinson shows, this masturbatory character was noticed by contemporary reviewers, by whom "Keats's poetry was characterized as a species of masturbatory exhibitionism" (p. 4). Poetry without either a clear subject or a clear public function is nonproductive in ways that recall the nonproductive sexuality of the masturbator. Levinson, whose emphasis is materialist, relates the uncertain status and function of the poetry to the uncertainties of Keats's own life. This combination of financial and social uncertainties made it difficult for him to establish himself as a poet and led him to try—with a lack of success shared, for different reasons, by Beddoes—to become a doctor. It is to these causes that Levinson attributes the peculiar nature of Keats's poetry, which she memorably describes as "so autotelic, autoerotic, so fetishistic and so stuck" (p. 9). This autotelism is similar to the solip-

19. *Romantic Potency: The Paradox of Desire* (Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press, 1992), p. 167.
20. See Levinson, *Keats's Life of Allegory: The Origins of a Style* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1988), pp. 4–5.

sism that Weisman identifies as one of Shelley's fears. In each case we have a poet who is unable (or fears that he will be unable) to break free from a closed system, from the prison of his own perceptions.

It is this sense of being trapped in one's own perceptions that Beddoes makes the theme of "Pygmalion." Beddoes stresses the extent to which a particular kind of perception results in a particular kind of portrayal—one that is emphatically not realistic—by making everything in the poem appear sexual. In other words, the frustrated sexuality of the lonely young sculptor fashions the very landscape that surrounds him. For instance, the inspiration for the statue comes to Pygmalion from the visit of a

> Spirit wild and bright,
> That came and went, and, when it came, its light
> On these dim earthy things, turn where he will,
> Its light, shape, beauty were reflected still.[27]

To Pygmalion, nature, which Frye describes as providing for some Romantic poets "something outside ordinary experience which nevertheless completes experience," is merely the dark background against which his inner thoughts and perceptions appear. It might appear that the sexualized vision of the world in the poem offers a form of transcendence, but, as we shall see, Beddoes's insistence on the artist's solitude, his inability to make contact with other human beings, and his death presents the life of the artist, like the life of the habitual masturbator, as a dead end.

Beddoes begins the poem by presenting Cyprus as a place in which landscape testifies to a powerful sexuality. This is not unusual in itself, as Cyprus is an island sacred to the goddess Venus. What is unusual about Beddoes's treatment is that in his version of Cyprus the sexuality that dominates and even shapes the landscape is masculine.

[27] "Pygmalion, or The Cyprian Statuary," in *The Poetical Works of Thomas Lovell Beddoes*, ed. Edmund Gosse, 2 vols. (London: J. M. Dent, 1890), 1:22, ll. 64–67. Further references to this work appear in the text.

There stood a city along Cyprus' side
Lavish of palaces, an arched tide
Of unrolled rocks, and, where the deities dwelled,
Their clustered domes pushed up the noon, and swelled
With the emotion of the god within —
As doth earth's hemisphere when showers begin
To tickle the still spirit at its core
Till pastures tremble and the river-shore
Squeezes out buds at every dewy pore.

(ll. 1–9)

The palaces are the first works of art mentioned in the poem. They are presented simultaneously as human artifacts, as natural things untouched by human agency (unrolled rocks), and as objects whose shapes testify to the power of the gods. This power is presented here as phallic: the domes are distended by the tumescence of the gods within them. Beddoes is making a covert play on the two meanings of the word "erection." In the simile that follows the description he follows up the phallic imagery with imagery of semen. The seminal showers "tickle" the earth and produce trembling and, ultimately, fertility—the buds, which suggest (uncircumcised) penises in their ability to grow and unfurl.

Beddoes depicts the world of the poem as immensely fertile, but only in masculine terms. In other words, there is sperm but there are no eggs. The images of this first passage dominate the poem, and I shall return to them. One important reuse of these images comes, significantly, when Beddoes describes the statues in Pygmalion's palace as "Immortal generations wrung from stone" (l. 26). "Generations" does not seem to go well with "immortal," because a generation is something that is born and that therefore will die. If the artworks are generations, furthermore, they must be sexually produced. Beddoes's implication appears to be that art is a form of reproduction that is superior to the normal human kind. The use of "wrung" suggests the creative struggle, but it also implies moistness. The statues have been squeezed, as a liquid, from a hard material; Beddoes is perhaps making a pun on "stone" as testicle. Even in

the reference to Venus, patroness of the island, Beddoes's emphasis is on masculinity. The city, he tells us, is Salamis

> at whose ocean-wall
> Beauty and love's paternal waves do beat
> That sprouted Venus.
>
> (ll. 32–34)

Here the sea is masculine rather than feminine, and the odd word "sprouted" recalls the phallic buds of the poem's opening.[28] Pygmalion's own creative power is clearly phallic, as Beddoes indicates when he speaks of Pygmalion as one

> Whose fiery chisel with creation fed
> The ship-wrecked rocks; who paid the heavens again
> Diamonds for ice; who made gods who make men.
>
> (ll. 36–38)

In this account of creation Pygmalion is seen not merely as a creator of art but also as a creator of humanity itself.[29]

Recent literary criticism has complicated our sense of what a phallic symbol is and what its implications are for poetry. In his work on the elegy, Peter M. Sacks reads Ovid's narratives of Apollo and Daphne and of Pan and Syrinx as stories that connect phallic creativity with the loss and the fear of castration resulting from the Oedipal complex. In both of the Ovidian stories the disappointed lover makes a musical instrument from the plant into which the woman he desired has been changed:

> that subsequent alteration, moving from nature to artifice, requires both a cutting off and a refashioning of the cut fragment

[28] Obviously Beddoes is alluding to the myth that Venus was born when the severed genitals of Saturn were thrown into the sea; however, the sea is usually imaged as feminine.

[29] The chisel is the equivalent of the world-creating mallet in "Alfarabi, the World Maker" (*Poetical Works*, I, 3–8). In that poem Beddoes makes the phallic implications clear by comparing the mallet to Gammer Gurton's needle (p. 8). One of the characters in the play of that name describes the needle as "A lytle thing with an hole in the end, as bright as any siller, / Small, longe, sharpe at the poynt, & straight as any pyller" (Mr. S., *Gammer Gurtons Nedle*, ed. H. F. B. Brett-Smith [Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1920], p. 20 [II.i.43–44]).

> Both episodes portray a turning away from erotic pursuits and attachments to substitutive, artificial figures of consolation.[10]

This reading presents artistic creation as something a man (or a god) does instead of having sex. Artistic creation, in fact, is presented in opposition both to the natural world in general and to natural sexuality in particular. As we shall see, this opposition characterizes Pygmalion's relation to the natural world and to the human society around him. Before returning to the poem, however, I want to look at an analysis that relates the phallic symbol to female creativity.

In *Romantic Potency* Laura Claridge sees the phallus as "the perfect mark of both desire as loss (due to the alienating entrance of the Name-of-the-Father) and the primal object that is lost—the mother" (p. 11). As an instrument of creation, the phallus paradoxically testifies to the estrangement of the male from the generative process. Claridge later develops an interpretation of the relation of the phallic symbol to the artistic process:

> If we assume that (in particular artistic) males might graft their wish for a womb onto the presence of that which they already possess, we see the ubiquity of the phallic symbol . . . as a reaction-formation to the absence of what men really wanted—the power to give birth, to be that most indisputable sign of God-like power, the mother-creator. . . . (pp. 150–51)

Like Sacks, Claridge sees the artistic phallic symbol—the pipe, the reed, the chisel—as the sign of a loss, but she also stresses the loss as, in fact, a lack, the lack of the ability to give birth. Her emphasis on true creation as female is important to all versions of the Pygmalion story, as all of these versions dramatize the failure of the male artist to create life. In his own version Beddoes tries to find a way around this failure by emphasizing Pygmalion's artistic powers and by presenting the statue itself as more than merely a piece of marble.

[10] Peter M. Sacks, *The English Elegy: Studies in the Genre from Spenser to Yeats* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1985), p. 6.

In the early sections of the poem the emphasis is al much on Pygmalion's solitude as on his artistic power does tells us that Pygmalion lives in a palace that "stood (l. 12) from Salamis, he describes him as "lonely" (l. 3 in a line strongly marked by assonance, he informs "Lovely and young, Pygmalion yet loved none" (l. 61). I mahon is a figure of great importance rather than an

> none in his sweep would venture,
> For you might feel that he was but the centre
> Of an inspired round, the middle spark
> Of a great moon, setting aside the dark
> And cloudy people
>
> (ll. 45–

The image connects Pygmalion to "the still spirit at [the core" in line 7, which responds to the tickling of sho trembling and squeezing out buds, an image that is rec the "smile-buds dewy" of Pygmalion's beautiful vision (l the fusion of the artist's phallic creativity and the image womb and of pregnancy used to describe the statue, we the merging of male and female that is necessary for nat production.

Nevertheless, this merging is not between the artis human female. Pygmalion's isolation from human so stressed by the comparison to the moon and, a few line to the sun: "His soul was bright and lonely as the sun, which he could create" (ll. 62–63). In "Pygmalion," th artist, like a celestial body, is peripheral in his relation man society and central in his effect on it. The traged poem comes from the fact that it is the artist's works th society; the man himself is unable to make any social a ual connection with his people. His separation recalls th sism that Shelley feared as the danger of the poet's life a can be said to have overwhelmed Alastor. In fact, B draws our attention to the strangeness of Pygmalion's tion from the people around him in terms that depict th aration as an estrangement from human sexuality: "Yet girls be fair, / Day-bright and evening-soft the maide

(ll. 57–58). Pygmalion's interior vision replaces the real people and places around him, just as the fantasies of masturbators were felt to prevent them from real participation in human affairs.

The solitude of Pygmalion is stressed by the nature of his inspiration, the spirit that comes to him and imposes its form on the world around him:

> Day-time and dark it came, like a dim mist
> Shelt'ring a god, it rolled, and, ere he wist,
> It fell aside, and dawned a shape of grace,
> And an inspired and melancholy face,
> Whose lips were smile-buds dewy:—into him
> It rolled like sun-light till his sight was dim
> And it was in his heart and soul again
> Not seen but breathed.
>
> (ll. 68–75)

This is not merely an artistic conception; it is a form of possession that comes to dominate Pygmalion. The spirit comes in the night and in the day, appearing first as a mist and then as a sun that dawns; in other words, it supersedes the natural lighting of sun or moon or stars. The vision penetrates Pygmalion ("into him / It rolled") and dims his sight. This dimness of sight emphasizes Pygmalion's isolation by preventing him, at least temporarily, from perceiving the world in which he lives. Beddoes's formulation here also tempers our sense of the artist as the phallic creator. Pygmalion's inspiration is a sort of insemination in which the male artist becomes pregnant with the vision from which he will produce his art.

Not even the material with which Pygmalion gives form to his vision is ordinary. It lies in a pool in an "unfrequented dell and wood" (l. 78) and has a celestial origin:

> In the water lay
> A fragment of pale marble, which they say
> Slipped from some fissure in the agued moon
> Which had caught earth-quake and a deadly swoon
> When the sun touched her with his hilly shade.
>
> (ll. 80–84)

The sun's touching the moon is presented as a sexual episo
As such, it parallels the account at the beginning of the po
of the origin of the palaces of Cyprus and of the buds along t
river. As in the opening lines, sexuality is described in terms
a disturbance in the landscape that produces an actual obj
rather than as an idea or emotion. Here, however, the proc
is not only sexual but also violent. The sun's power is ma
fested in a shade that results in violent motion, illness, a
death. The genesis of the marble is an eclipse, and Beddoe
to some extent drawing on traditional associations of eclip
with impending disasters. In the case of "Pygmalion" the i
pending disaster is the death of the artist. To some extent,
could say that the artistic project described in the poem
doomed from the beginning because the raw material for i
presented to us as the result of violent and illicit sexuality.

Pygmalion finds the marble when he is walking and "St
thing the air with thoughts which over-ran / The compass of
mind" (ll. 89–90). Creative work is described as a fluid tl
cannot be kept inside, and the artist's inner life blinds him
the world around him. In fact, Pygmalion is so dazed by his f
tasies that he only discovers the marble by accident: "Idly
paused, and laid unwitting hand / On the cold stone" (ll. 9
92). Beddoes describes the stone as a phallic object that Py
malion desires and that he cannot live without:

> It felt
> Less porous than a lip which kisses melt,
> And diamond-hard. That night his workmen wrought
> With iron under it, and it was brought,
> This dripping quarry, while the sky was starry,
> Home to the weary, yearning statuary.
>
> (ll. 92–97)

The adjectives that modify "statuary" reinforce the sexual n
ture of the situation.[31] Beddoes extends this sexualization of t
artistic process to the sculpting itself and presents Pygmalio
artistic activity as masturbation.

[31] There may be a further sexual suggestion in the use of "quarry": this word
means something that is hunted, and hunting terms are frequently given sexual im
cations in poetry.

He stole unseen into the meadow's air,
And fed on sight of summer, till the life
Was too abundant in him; and so, rife
With light creative, he went in alone
And poured it warm upon the growing stone.
(ll. 106–10)

Beddoes stresses Pygmalion's isolation by describing him as "unseen"; the other inhabitants of the city are all asleep in the fierce heat of noon. In this passage Pygmalion is aware of the world around him, at least to a point, but nature (the summer meadow) becomes art by his solitary fertilization of the "growing" (both pregnant and tumescent) marble. Beddoes returns to this point when he describes the finished statue as "smooth and full, as if one gush / Of life had washed her" (ll. 128–29).

Beddoes begins his description of the carving itself by speaking once again of the sculptor's chisel in sexual terms: "The magic chisel thrust, and gashed, and swept, / Flying and manifold" (ll. 111–12). For the most part, though, his images in this passage recall the opening of the poem:

no cloud e'er wept
So fast, so thick, so light upon the close
Of shapeless green it meant to make a rose;—
And as insensibly out of a stick
Dead in the winter-time, the dew-drops quick
And the thin sun-beams, and the airy shower
Raise and unwrap a many-leaved flower
And then a fruit; so from the barren stock
Of the deer-shading, formless valley-rock
This close stone-bud he, quiet as the air,
Had shaped a lady wonderfully fair.
(ll. 112–22)

Once again creative work is described in seminal imagery (the weeping clouds, the dew, the shower) and the thing created is described in terms of erection (the stick that is raised and unwrapped, the stone-bud). In this passage, however, Beddoes creates a discord between artistic and natural creation, as the term "stone-bud" shows. While many plants and trees do indeed appear dead in winter and still bloom in spring, a rock

will never bloom (a point that Beddoes emphasizes by calling the marble a "barren stock").

The rock that is not the normal earthly rock sculptors use cannot be made into art by the normal methods sculptors use. Beddoes uses the description of the process of sculpting the statue as another way to emphasize Pygmalion's apartness, and he makes Pygmalion seem like a man possessed. After telling us that Pygmalion "carved it not" (l. 145), Beddoes says

> The winged tool, as digging out a spell,
> Followed a magnet wheresoe'er it fell,
> That sucked and led it right: and for the rest,
> The living form, with which the stone he blest,
> Was the loved image stepping from his breast.
> (ll. 148–52)

As Donner indicates, "by its own inherent power the idea compels matter and dictates to it its form" (p. 175). Pygmalion is driven on by the picture in his mind, the masturbatory fantasy that has changed his perception of the world around him and obscured reality. Now the fantasy assumes not just form (the statue) but also power, as it comes "stepping" forth. It is as if the spirit that came to Pygmalion and inspired him has taken material form.

In his narration of the statue's creation Beddoes may be drawing on medieval stories of the succubus (or succuba), a demon in feminine form who had sex with sleeping scholars. At least part of the reason for the invention of this myth was the need to explain away the nocturnal emissions that testified to sexual activity on the part of men who had sworn vows of chastity. One consequence of the visits of succubi was the wasting away of the men they molested (this, of course, is the origin of our expression "hag-ridden"). Thus the succubi have much the same function in medieval religious discourse as the dangers of masturbation had in enlightenment medical discourse. In any case, whether we see the statue as the result of a fantasy or of a demonic visitor, the effect on Pygmalion is the same. Because the statue is a manifestation of the image in Pygmalion's mind

therefore loves he it, and therefore stays
About the she-rock's feet from hour to hour
Anchored to her by his own heart.

(ll. 153–55)

Donner cites the phrase "she-rock's feet" as one of the "monsters of bad taste" that, in his opinion, can be found in Beddoes's early writing (p. 176). But surely the point of the phrase is that the situation is monstrous. The expression "she-rock" is a stronger form of the "stone-bud" in line 121, and like the earlier term, it is intended to underline how unnatural Pygmalion's creation is.

Artistic creation, then, is like masturbation in that each can be seen as an unnatural act, a monstrous parody of natural propagation and reproduction. In order to point out that Pygmalion's work is transgressive, Beddoes suggests that the sculptor is guilty of hubris. By creating the statue Pygmalion has become a "Dealer of immortality," "Greater than Jove himself" (ll. 134–35). Like Prometheus, for instance, Pygmalion is punished for his crime:

Thou hast done
That glory which has undone thee for ever.
For thou art weak, and tearful, and dost shiver
Wintrily sad, and thy life's healthy river
With which thy body once was overflown
Is dried and sunken to its banks of bone.

(ll. 139–44)

Pygmalion's wasting decline is what any enlightenment doctor would have predicted for a habitual masturbator. In keeping with the seminal imagery in the poem, Pygmalion is also drying up; the inner force that led him to make the statue has now passed to it. In this connection I think the words of Pygmalion's appeal on behalf of his statue are revealing: "Inspire her, gods" (l. 175). Beddoes is playing on both meanings of "inspire": the statue, to be complete, must be animated by the gods, and it is now the "she-rock" that awaits artistic inspiration. Pygmalion has reached the end of masculine creative powers.

Although Ovid's Pygmalion does not die, there are numerous stories—by Ovid and by others—of people who turn into stone. It is significant that the one that Beddoes uses is the story of Niobe. In his appeal to the gods, Pygmalion, addressing Apollo, cites Niobe as a precedent:

> 'Twas Niobe thou drov'st from flesh to stone:
> Shew thus the hole she broke, and let her follow
> That mother's track of steps and eyelid rain,
> Treading them backwards into life again.
>
> (ll. 187–90)

Niobe's fate is compared to breaking a hole, a sort of birth canal between the world of the living and the world of stone in which Niobe is trapped. The allusion to birth fits in well both with Niobe's particular crime (tactless pride in her own fertility) and with Pygmalion's crime (usurping the creative power of the gods). Furthermore, Niobe is, after all, not just any human being turned into stone:

> nec flecti cervix nec bracchia reddere motus
> nec pes ire potest; intra quoque viscera saxum est.
> flet tamen.[32]

The form of Niobe, turned to rock and transported far from her home, continues to weep. In essence, Niobe and Pygmalion are guilty of the same crime, and Beddoes's allusion to her here suggests that she is really a precedent for Pygmalion rather than for the statue he has made.

The most obvious point of comparison between Niobe and Pygmalion is that both are associated with liquid: Niobe's tears and Pygmalion's creative seminal fluid. As we have seen, however, the generous flow (like the "paternal waves" of the sea) of the beginning and middle of the poem has dried up. In the final lines of the poem Pygmalion's life "Shakes like a dew-drop in a broken rose" (l. 209), and his "life's healthy river" is re

32 Ovid, *Metamorphoses, Books I–VIII*, ed. and rev. G. P. Goold, trans. Frank Justus Miller, 3d ed. (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1977), p. 308, Book VI, ll. 308–10 ("her neck cannot bend nor her arms move, nor her feet go. Within also her vitals are stone. But still she weeps." [Loeb translation]).

placed by the Styx: "His foot is stretching into Charon's barge" (l. 214). As in the other versions of the story, only a miracle can save him, but the miracle here is not the transformation of the statue into a woman:

> Such a flash, and such a sound, the world
> Is stung by, as if something was unfurled
> That held great bliss within its inmost curled.
> Roof after roof, the palace rends asunder.
> (ll. 224–27)

At the beginning of the poem Beddoes described the palaces of Cyprus as having domes that "swelled / With the emotion of the god within," and the unfurling of the palace recalls the "stone-bud" out of which Pygmalion made his statue. Beddoes exploits the potential of these images and describes a sort of natural (or divine) orgasm that destroys Pygmalion's palace altogether. In its unfurling the palace resembles a "stone-bud," like the marble out of which Pygmalion makes his statue.

If the destruction of the palace is to be read as an orgasm, then there should be a corresponding seminal image. It is at this point, in the very last lines of the poem, that Beddoes returns to the allusion to Niobe:

> And then—O sight of joy and placid wonder!
> He lies, beside a fountain, on the knee
> Of the sweet woman-statue, quietly
> Weeping the tears of his felicity.
> (ll. 228–31)

Pygmalion's artistic power, which has consistently been imaged as semen in the poem, is diverted into the fountain and into his tears. In a sense, he has become Niobe. Like Niobe's pleas for her children's lives, Pygmalion's plea for the statue to be brought to life has not, apparently, been granted. The difference between the "woman-statue" of line 230 and the "she-rock" of line 154 is the difference between a finished work of art and the raw material for it. While this is obviously an important difference, the statue is still only a statue. At this point one more connection between masturbation and Pygmalion's art can be made: neither the semen of the masturbator nor the seminal

power of Pygmalion results in actual human offspring, in both cases, the fantasy life leads ultimately to the death of the one who fantasizes. Pygmalion's masculine creative energy is made to seem equivalent to the tears of a woman whose fertility has been erased.

Nevertheless, although Pygmalion has been wasting away for most of the second half of the poem, he does not die at its end. Instead he seems to become part of the statue, an ending that reverses the traditional one in which the statue becomes part of humanity. Laura Claridge says of *Alastor* that "the death the poet seeks is not an entanglement of treachery and despair, as some critics would have it, but a final location of *jouissance*" (p. 162). Similarly, Pygmalion's tears are the tears of felicity. What he experiences is not death—at least not as we understand it—but rather a union with the work of art he has created. This is clearly a greater artistic triumph than is provided by Ovid's version, in which Pygmalion is forced to ask for the help of Venus and in which the work of art turns into the woman. In Beddoes's poem it is the work of art that dominates. Of course, this artistic triumph is achieved at the cost of leaving the human world altogether, but Beddoes presents this as felicity and even transcendence, rather than as death.

Pygmalion's felicity is perhaps a remembrance of the original felicity of family life: the final tableau of the poem is curiously maternal, as the sculptor lies across the lap of a larger female figure. In his discussion of *In Memoriam* Peter Sacks asks "how but in relation to an immortal matrix should man most suffer his mortality? And how can the mourner avoid repeating his own necessary separation from that matrix?" (p. 186). We can read Beddoes's final tableau as suggesting that Pygmalion's artistic power enables him to avoid this separation and to merge, in a way that recalls *Alastor* and the "Ode to a Nightingale," with the immortal matrix. Paradoxically, it is by becoming a work of art that Pygmalion finally rejoins the world of nature, represented as the mother of us all. Beddoes's treatment of the Pygmalion story reverses the traditional gender dynamic in which the man creates and the woman is created: male creative power is merely a symbol or a part of female creative power. To some extent this dynamic is clear in Ovid's version, where Venus uses

her power to bring about the happy ending, but, as I have suggested, this resolution depends on the assertion of natural over artistic power. In Beddoes's version the female principle is powerfully creative in both natural and artistic ways.

It must be admitted, however, that the natural creativity of the female—her ability to give birth—is only present in "Pygmalion" as a past event, not as a future one. One of the characteristics of masturbation as described by the elder Dr. Beddoes is that it is typical of youth. In time the boy will grow up and autoeroticism will become alloeroticism, or so the theory goes. We can see Pygmalion's autoeroticism and his literal creation of a fantasy object as a refusal to grow up and to place his sexuality at the service of an economy of production. The ending of the poem presents us with yet another example of a closed system. Here the closed system is a sexuality that does not help to create the future by creating mortal generations but that rather returns to its own origin in the maternal body. Instead of the death that is the price of adult sexuality, presented as a turning from the self and the fantasy objects of autoeroticism, the sculptor chooses the immortality of art, presented as a cycle in which the originary fertility of the mother can be recuperated. The act of recuperation is symbolized by Beddoes's re-creation, in the final tableau, of Michelangelo's *Pietà*, the most famous artistic depiction of the reunion between the mother and child and of the possibility of resurrection.

When Beddoes wrote "Pygmalion" he had just graduated from Oxford and appeared to be on the verge of a brilliant literary career. Instead, he decided to devote himself to medicine. Medicine, particularly the anatomy and physiology in which he specialized, would seem to offer a chance of dealing with something tangible, that is, with the real human body as opposed to the fantasized human body that is the subject of "Pygmalion." But instead of establishing a name for himself as a scientist, Beddoes went back and forth between medicine and poetry for the rest of his short life without achieving fame or material success in either endeavor. As far as Beddoes's literary

career is concerned, I think his failure to establish a
himself in his lifetime was partly due to his decisio
dramatist rather than a poet. Shortly after arriving in
Beddoes began the process (which only ended with
in 1849) of writing *Death's Jest Book*, a play that, altho
mably brilliant, could not easily be staged. Beddoes'
drama seems to have been a serious miscalculation,
Frye says perceptively that "we may sometimes wond
Beddoes, like Goethe, was less of a serious dramatist th
lyrical poet" (p. 660). I think Beddoes was a great
but perhaps he was drawn to write plays partly becaus
a public art, unlike poetry, which was increasingly
during the enlightenment (and after) with private c
tion and reflection. Being a dramatist, then, wou
Beddoes with a way to remain a writer without succ
the solitary vice of poetry. In a tragic irony, the play w
Beddoes intended to inaugurate a career as a drama
up by being for him personally the equivalent of the
statue" for Pygmalion.

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"Cousin Holman's Dresser": Science, Social Change, and the Pathologized Female in Gaskell's "Cousin Phillis"

CLARE PETTITT

GASKELL completed her novel *Sylvia's Lovers*, the "tiresome book" that had taken her three years to write, in January 1863.[1] It is a novel in which will and desire seem impotent over the development of narrative and history, and despite the fact that no scientists appear in its pages, there is evidence within the very narrative structure of *Sylvia's Lovers* that Gaskell is engaging with scientific discourses and the much-discussed theories of unconscious development that were current in the 1860s.[2] It is impossible

[1] Gaskell's daughter Meta, in a 19 December 1862 letter to Effie Wedgwood, described her mother "writing 10 pages a day of the tiresome book that is really a story without an end" (quoted in Jenny Uglow, *Elizabeth Gaskell: A Habit of Stories* [London: Faber and Faber, 1993], p. 503).

[2] Both Uglow in *Elizabeth Gaskell*, chapter 24, and Kate Flint in *Elizabeth Gaskell* (Plymouth: Northcote House, 1995), chapter 6, discuss the Darwinian structure of *Sylvia's Lovers*. Although no actual evidence exists of Gaskell's ever having read Darwin's *On the Origin of Species*, she could not have failed to have been aware of the furor over its publication in 1859, moving as she did in intellectual and unorthodox circles, and she was certainly aware of the similar scandal over the publication of *Essays and Reviews*, which appeared only three months afterward. She writes to Charles Eliot Norton in April 1861: "Everybody was talking about America & Essays and Reviews" (letter to Charles Eliot Norton, 16 April 1861, in *The Letters of Mrs Gaskell*, ed. J. A. V. Chapple and Arthur Pollard [Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1967], p. 649). As Benjamin Jowett m

that Gaskell, living through the 1850s and 1860s in Unitarian middle-class Manchester, related by marriage to Charles Darwin, and in contact with many of the leading scientists of her age, could have ignored a rapidly developing scientific culture.[3] As Arnold Thackray has pointed out, for the Mancunian middle class in the nineteenth century, science "offered a coherent explanatory scheme for the unprecedented, change-orientated society in which [social reformers] found themselves unavoidably if willingly cast in leading roles."[4]

Nevertheless, disentangling Gaskell's view—or rather views—of science is a confusing process that seems at first to yield only contradictions. "Not scientific not mechanical" was Gaskell's own emphatic assessment of herself in a September 1851 letter to her friend Anne Robson in which she describes a trip to the Great Exhibition in that year (*Letters*, p. 159). Yet I argue that while Gaskell energetically rejected any simplistic notion of science as a "coherent explanatory scheme," throughout her work she inscribes and reinscribes versions of "scientific progress," repeatedly attempting to find a scientific paradigm for social change that is genuinely capable of expressing and ordering her desire for social transformation. I also argue that, when scientific paradigms break down in Gaskell's fiction, the failures are projected onto the feminine subject. The female occupies a double space in Gaskell's narrative that renders her both hero and victim, both "bound by another's rules" (in Gaskell's words)[5] and simultaneously representative of the power to transform those rules. That the developing scientific

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Mark Pattison, two of the seven theologians who contributed to *Essays and Reviews* were friends of the Gaskells, "everybody" presumably includes herself.

[3] Scientists of the Gaskells' acquaintance included James Nasmyth, the inventor of the steam hammer; Joseph Paxton, the designer of the Crystal Palace; William Fairbairn, inventor of the riveting machine; George Allman, Professor of Zoology at Edinburgh University; Lord Francis Egerton, patron of Manchester science; Benjamin Brodie, Professor of Chemistry at Oxford; the physicist James Joule; and the chemists James Allan, Edward Schunk, and Henry Roscoe (see Uglow, pp. 559–60).

[4] "Natural Knowledge in Cultural Context: The Manchester Model," *American Historical Review*, 79 (1974), 682.

[5] Letter to Catherine Winkworth, 29 November 1848, in *Letters*, p. 64: "Mrs [J. J.] Tayler is shocked at such a subject of conversation [Scott's *Kenilworth*] on a *Sunday*,—so there I am in a scrape,—well! it can't be helped, I am myself and nobody else, and can't be bound by another's rules" (pp. 63–64).

culture and the gender-divided culture of "separate spheres" are ideologically linked in Gaskell's work becomes very clear in her last two works of fiction, the novella "Cousin Phillis" and the unfinished novel *Wives and Daughters: An Everyday Story*. In these last narratives, as she had done in her earlier work, Gaskell again takes up figurations of the scientist in an attempt to conflate human agency and change, while using the female as the site upon which change is ultimately projected.

Gaskell wrote "Cousin Phillis" directly after *Sylvia's Lovers*, throughout the autumn and winter of 1863, and the novella appeared in parts in the *Cornhill* between November 1863 and February 1864.[6] At first reading, the work seems to mark a complete departure from *Sylvia's Lovers*. A. W. Ward describes it as a "simple tale" of "homely charm,"[7] and indeed Gaskell seems to have restored the control of nature to man; there is nothing of the wild landscape or treacherous sea of *Sylvia's Lovers* in the cultivated garden and farm where most of the action of "Cousin Phillis" takes place. Even the surrounding countryside is described as "very wild and pretty."[8] Gaskell has changed the scale, and the very brevity and intimacy of the novella form supports the theme of her story, for "Cousin Phillis" is about looking closely, about attention to detail. The initial impression is that the wide, created universe has been circumscribed and shrunk into the garden of Hope Farm: "there was a low wall round it, with an iron railing on the top of the wall, and two great gates between pillars crowned with stone balls for a state entrance" (p. 265). This is a place where order and privacy prevail, at least superficially. Yet there are four scientists in "Cousin Phillis." Every male character in the story, with the exception of the farm-laborer Timothy Cooper and the ministers, is to some

[6] Jenny Uglow has suggested that Gaskell's portrayal of Minister Holman's shock at his daughter's confession of her love for Holdsworth owes something to Gaskell's own state of mind at the time of writing "Cousin Phillis"; news reached her in March 1863 of the sudden engagement of her daughter Florence to a young barrister and eccentric young man, Charles Crompton (see Uglow, p. 538).

[7] Introduction to *Cousin Phillis*, ed. Ward, vol. 7 of *The Works of Mrs. Gaskell, Knutsford Edition* (London: Smith, Elder and Co., 1906; rpt. New York: AMS Press, 1972), pp. xiii and xvii.

[8] Elizabeth Gaskell, "Cousin Phillis," in *Cousin Phillis and Other Tales*, ed. Angus Easson (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1981), p. 261. Further references to this work are to this edition and appear in the text.

degree a man of science. After her bleak examination of Darwinian theory in *Sylvia's Lovers*, with "Cousin Phillis" Gaskell returns to the scientific paradigm of mechanics and heavy industry that she had used before in both *Mary Barton* and *North and South*.

Gaskell's friend Catherine Winkworth gives an account in an 18 March 1856 letter to Emily Shaen of a visit to Mr. Nasmyth's Patricroft works made by a party comprising herself, Selina Winkworth, Gaskell, and her eldest daughter, Marianne. Leaping up to explain the workings of some piece of machinery, Nasmyth "illustrated with impromptu diagrams drawn on the wall alternately with a piece of white chalk and a sooty forefinger."[9] Jenny Uglow notices the transposition of this incident into "Cousin Phillis" (see Uglow, p. 544), when the irrepressibly scientific Mr. Manning, an inventor and the narrator's father, uses the same method of illustration:

> I saw my father taking a straight burning stick out of the fire, and after waiting for a minute, and examining the charred end to see if it was fitted for his purpose, he went to the hard-wood dresser, scoured to the last pitch of whiteness and cleanliness, and began drawing with the stick, the best substitute for chalk or charcoal within his reach, for his pocket-book pencil was not strong or bold enough for his purpose. When he had done, he began to explain his new model of a turnip-cutting machine to the minister, who had been watching him in silence all the time. Cousin Holman had, in the meantime, taken a duster out of a drawer, and, under pretence of being as much interested as her husband in the drawing, was secretly trying on an outside mark how easily it would come off, and whether it would leave her dresser as white as before. ("Cousin Phillis," p. 289)

The similarity of the accounts is undeniable, but Gaskell transposes the inscription from a factory wall to a hardwood dresser in the kitchen of the Holmans' farmhouse. The comfortable small comedy of Cousin Holman's surreptitious attempts to assess the damage to her dresser frames the scene with the recognizable referents of domestic comedy. But in fact Cousin Hol-

[9] Quoted in Uglow, pp. 667–68, n. 18.

man's dresser will never be as white as before. Gaskell chooses to represent the nineteenth-century "march of progress" in terms of intimate material changes that penetrate the most traditional of homes. Scientific innovation crosses classes and creeds and threatens traditional boundaries just like the railway lines that Holdsworth is laying over "the shaking uncertain ground" (p. 263). And while celebrating the potential of scientific change, Gaskell also struggles to incorporate—or at least to include, its effects on individual lives in her inventories of the small details of human existence.

"Through Mr. Manning Gaskell shows that the older, simpler order can co-exist with industrial progress," claims Uglow (p. 544). Mr. Manning does, indeed, seem to be presented as the "good scientist," but he does not belong to an "older, simpler order"; rather he belongs to the discourse of self-help to which Gaskell returns after her bleak evocation in *Sylvia's Lovers* of a world devoid of will. The "older, simpler order" of science is as much of a myth as the "natural" sexual innocence of women. Yet in "Cousin Phillis" Gaskell seems able to engage aggressively only with the latter myth. She transfers all her potentially radical questions about change onto a central female character while leaving the more problematic questions of class and technological and social change unresolved.

Manning is an example of the hero-victim inventor of nineteenth-century self-help literature. He is introduced leaving Paul at his new lodgings in Eltham, when he is reported to have delivered "a few plain precepts" to his son (p. 259). Gaskell's emphasis, in all of the sporadic descriptive glimpses of Manning, is on his rejection of superfluity, verbal or financial:

> He was a mechanic by trade, but he had some inventive genius and a great deal of perseverance, and had devised several valuable improvements in railway machinery. He did not do this for profit, though, as was reasonable, what came in the natural course of things was acceptable; he worked out his ideas because, as he said, "until he could put them into shape, they plagued him by night and by day." (p. 259)

The scattered clues that the reader is given about Manning—in a narrative from which he is largely absent—can be recon

structed into a variation on a familiar self-help invention narrative. Typically, perseverance is privileged over genius, of which Manning only possesses "some." Unlike Jem Wilson's "crank, or somewhat" in *Mary Barton*,[10] though, Manning's inventions are not only in the form of "devised . . . improvements" to machinery already in existence. He is also the creator of Manning's Patent Winch. "It was in the *Gazette*," boasts Paul, "It was patented. I thought every one had heard of Manning's patent winch" (p. 276). During the narrative, too, Manning is busy designing "Manning's driving wheel" (p. 287). Yet despite this, Manning is no radical genius likely to change the world at one stroke. Gaskell insists on the Holmans' ignorance of his great innovation in shunting, and later in the book, when Holdsworth is about to leave suddenly for Canada, she inserts a significant parenthesis as he receives the letter of commission. "'It is from Greathed the engineer' (Greathed was well known in those days, he is dead now, and his name half-forgotten)" (p. 313). These small details seem to indicate that Gaskell is anxious to dispel any suspicion that Manning may be in possession of power. She seems equally anxious to indicate the gradualism of his transformation into a rich man. It is stressed that Manning does not invent for money but rather because he is "called" to do it as a Romantic vocation. Even when his ideas are capitalized by the rich Mr. Ellison ("who lives in King Street? why, he drives his carriage!" [p. 290]), Gaskell stresses that profit is "a long way off, anyhow" (p. 290). And, indeed, when Paul subsequently makes a visit home to Birmingham he finds no evidence of sudden social transformation. "There was no display of increased wealth in our modest household" (p. 306). In fact, the social position of Mr. Manning is not shown to change at all in the course of the narrative, although the reader is told that it has changed substantially. At the start of the novel it is noted carefully, that Paul's situation as a clerk to a railway engineer is "rather above his [father's] in life" (p. 259)—which is that of a mechanic—so Manning's partnership with Ellison represents a significant social leap.

[10] Elizabeth Gaskell, *Mary Barton*, ed. Edgar Wright (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1987), pp. 165–66.

Yet while Gaskell so cautiously plays down Manning's growing fame and fortune, she allows other, contradictory evidence to accrue. For instance, Holdsworth, in paying homage to the older man, shows Paul his "ungrudging admiration of his *great mechanical genius*" (p. 293, emphasis added), and Holdsworth is reported to have spoken of Manning "often . . . as having the same kind of genius for mechanical invention as that of George Stephenson" (p. 287). While Holdsworth seems to see a greatness of genius in Manning that makes him a powerful figure, he also gives an account of Manning's life that fits it perfectly for the pages of Samuel Smiles's *Self-Help* (1859):

> 'Here's a Birmingham workman, self-educated, one may say—having never associated with stimulating minds, or had what advantages travel and contact with the world may be supposed to afford—working out his own thoughts into steel and iron, making a scientific name for himself—a fortune, if it pleases him to work for money—and keeping his singleness of heart, his perfect simplicity of manner.' . . . (p. 291)

Money here, and in such other "industrial success literature,"[11] is the unstable signifier. When Gaskell repeatedly and emphatically represents Manning as not interested in "money," the word stands in place of "social power." The "Birmingham workman" could have as much money as he liked, and as quickly as he liked, if this would not affect his social position. But, inevitably, it would. Gaskell finds herself in something of an ideological bind here: she needs to reward Manning as a good and virtuous working-class man, yet she also needs to control the social change that such a reward necessarily entails, because her fear of working-class power remains active. Her solution is to limit his access to the text, creating a sense of his presence by narrativizing his absence with contradictory evidence of his social mobility and of his simultaneously staying in precisely the same place as before.[12]

The phrase is Patrick Brantlinger's in *The Spirit of Reform: British Literature and Politics, 1832–1867* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1977), p. 120.

Uglow argues convincingly that Manning is based on Gaskell's acquaintance James Nasmyth, giving as evidence the Patricroft works visit and an anecdote apparently told by Nasmyth about gentleman-apprentices wearing gloves which appears as a shared joke between Holdsworth and Manning in *Cousin Phillis* (see p. 287; see

As an independent center of value in "Cousin Phillis" Manning is not successful because, like Job Legh and Jem Wilson, he suffers from being the unstable creation of a discourse other than that of the narrative that contains him. All of these characters are, in a word, stereotypes. They are the hero-victim inventors of self-help literature, and although Gaskell attempts to deploy them within her narratives as agents of change, they are unable to perform the symbolic work that she intends for them, disabled as they are by the essential contradiction in their construction. To say, as Uglow does, that "through Mr Manning Gaskell shows that the older, simpler order can co-exist with industrial progress" makes the strange assumption that an "order" of scientists like Manning existed as somehow separate and that it antedated "industrial progress." In fact, men like James Nasmyth and George Stephenson were the agents of "industrial progress." Similarly, the implication that "older" and "simpler" are adjectives that sit logically together is another assumption founded on the very myth of progressive development that Gaskell attacks elsewhere in her work. Yet Uglow's is precisely the reading that the text of "Cousin Phillis" is very carefully constructed to produce. Through Manning, I would argue, Gaskell attempts to invent an "older, simpler order" and thus separates the "Birmingham workman" from the processes of "industrial progress" and, furthermore, separates "industrial progress" from its inevitable corollary, social change.[17]

The two principal scientists in "Cousin Phillis," Manning and Holdsworth, dramatize Gaskell's own conflicting views of science and its social roles. Holdsworth is not a hero-victim. He

Uglow, chapter 25). If this is the case, I think it is only important insofar as it exacerbates Gaskell's problems with the representation of Manning. In *The Machinery Question and the Making of Political Economy, 1815–1848* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1980) Maxine Berg writes, "By the 1820s and 1830s James Nasmyth, James Fox, Matthew Murray, Sharp Roberts & Co., Hicks, Hargreaves & Co., Fairbairn and Lillie, and Joseph Whitworth were directing large-scale machine shops, foundries and engine factories in the Midlands and the North" (pp. 153–54). Nasmyth was clearly a rich industrialist while Manning is represented as simultaneously successful and poor.

The intentionality of this process of representation is perhaps not entirely clear from my reading. I am not suggesting that Gaskell intended to write the working class out of any share in industrial progress and, therefore, social change. I am rather attempting to argue that Gaskell, once she decides to deploy the good and worthy stereotype of Mr Manning, is locked into a discourse that inevitably produces this out-

is a new type in Gaskell's fiction, and he represents a move toward the representation of a "real" social and scientific "new type," the professional scientist. In "Cousin Phillis" Holdsworth appears as the Romantic Scientist. Not only is he the flippant focus of the romantic plot, but Gaskell also heaps him with all the accoutrements of the "romantic hero." He is undeniably "exotic": "he had travelled on the Continent, and wore mustachios and whiskers of a somewhat foreign fashion" (p. 261); he is "young, handsome, keen, well-dressed" (p. 287); he speaks fluent Italian and has "a long soft drawl" (p. 287); and Phillis initially thinks him "very like a foreigner" (p. 300). He is also slightly dangerous: the two good dissenting ladies of the pastry shop that Paul lodges above disapprove of him (p. 262), and he gives Phillis a copy of *I Promessi Sposi*, a novel that would probably not be approved of by her father, who feels that Holdsworth's company "is like dram-drinking" (p. 305). All of these vital credentials for the stereotypical romantic hero are supplied by Gaskell over and above the adulation that Holdsworth is afforded by the adolescent Paul, who immediately grants him "the position of hero in my boyish mind" (p. 261). The narrator insists on this "hero-worship" (p. 283), reflecting on "his empire over me" (p. 293) and noticing that Holdsworth similarly exerts an "unconscious hold" (p. 305) over the Holman family.

Holdsworth, in contrast to Manning, is an educated and well-read scientist, a southerner and a "gentleman." He refers to "my heaps of scientific books" (p. 294), but he is far from bookish—"He had no notion of doing or saying things without a purpose" (p. 265)—and is not interested in anything that is "merely narrative, without leading to action" (p. 287). He tells Paul that "'Activity and readiness go a long way in our profession'" (p. 314), a maxim that seems to mirror Minister Holman's injunction to Paul: "'Whatsoever thine hand findeth to do, do it with all thy might'" (p. 330).[11] But Holdsworth's is a restless and promiscuous purpose, looking for work in the global capi-

This was a popular maxim in the nineteenth century. William Bell Scott had used it shortly before "Cousin Phillis" as the motto for his picture *Iron and Coal*, painted 1856 for one of his "Scenes from Border History," a series of public paintings that celebrate industrial progress on Tyneside. Information from the Witt Library, London University.

talist marketplace, whereas Minister Holman looks for his duties within the boundaries of his "circumscribed life" (p. 326). Although it is not clear whether Hope Farm is run for subsistence only, none of the characters is ever seen going to market. The Holmans seem to live within a closed and self-sufficient economy where "there was plenty all around in which the humblest labourer was made to share" (p. 333).[15] Holdsworth, by contrast, inhabits the free market, and his restlessness and opportunism belong to the competitive world of industrial capitalism. He represents for Gaskell the dangerous and disruptive power of science and industry that potentially unsettles and disturbs such enclosed self-sufficiency. His sudden absences—first from his job, in the "dark overshadowed dale" (p. 294) where he contracts the low fever, and then his final departure to Canada—extend the world of the novella suddenly, so that Hope Farm no longer seems quite so entirely a microcosm. Holdsworth's letters bring "a whiff of foreign atmosphere into [Minister Holman's] circumscribed life" (p. 326)—a connection is formed between Hope Farm and the macrocosm. Holdsworth, unlike Manning, represents science and industrial progress as change. Old stories will necessarily be interrupted: the romantic hero will suddenly leave for Canada, never to return.

In comparison with Manning, Holdsworth is frenetically mobile, but his is not a social mobility. Gaskell is at pains to make clear in the passage in which Holdsworth and Manning meet that Holdsworth is a "gentleman":

> my father, his hands, blackened beyond the power of soap and water by years of labour in the foundry, speaking a strong Northern dialect, while Mr. Holdsworth had a long soft drawl in his voice, as many of the Southerners have, and was reckoned in Eltham to give himself airs. (p. 287)

[15] We hear a great deal about the farm's produce in "Cousin Phillis." Phillis reads Virgil while paring apples; she and Holdsworth first meet in the kitchen garden where she is picking peas; she tells Paul that her basket of eggs contains potatoes; and she entertains Holdsworth with "home-made bread . . . and newly-churned butter" (p. 300). This, I think, reinforces the sense of self-sufficiency that Holdsworth disrupts.

The fact that Manning was a mechanic in the works where Holdsworth served his engineering apprenticeship makes their "mutual regard" (p. 287) suspect. Manning is figured as the classless inventor who can joke with the gentleman, Holdsworth, about other gentlemen wearing gloves for dirty mechanical work. While this passage could be read uncritically as a celebration of the democratizing power of science, it can also be read as a transparent middle-class fantasy of class reconciliation and cooperation.

Manning is supposed to be consulting Holdsworth about his driving wheel and the offer he has been made of a partnership. This attempt to bring the two scientists together is convincing neither as social realism nor in terms of the representations that Gaskell is using. A vast gulf yawns between the social positions of a mechanic and a gentleman-apprentice. Such a relationship between a young and foppish professional and a middle-aged laborer is unlikely enough; that it could function with no class friction at all seems preposterous. The other problem is representational. Because Gaskell has drawn on the hero-victim inventor myth for her representation of Manning, he cannot authentically enter systems of exchange and the capitalist market. Holdsworth, although no less a stereotype, represents exchange value and is, perhaps excessively, transferable. The two men cannot communicate, as they are created in different genres, and it is perhaps significant that their conversation is not represented but rather is reported by Paul.

Holdsworth tries to explain Minister Holman's scientific ability as hereditary—"it's evidently good blood" (p. 294)—but Paul "knocks a pretty theory on the head" (p. 294) by pointing out that Minister Holman is not related to his father by blood but by marriage. Thus Gaskell calls into question the basis of scientific ability; it seems to be spread arbitrarily and widely among the male characters in "Cousin Phillis." "I have fewer books than leisure to read them, and I have a prodigious big appetite," remarks the Minister when he asks Paul to help him with the technical words in "a volume of stiff mechanics" (p. 277). Later he asks Paul to recommend "any simple book on dynamics that I could put in my pocket, and study a little at leisure times in the day" (p. 278). The Minister appears to be

engaged in a program of rigorous self-help, which in some way allies him to the representation of Manning. Gaskell tells us that the two men "seemed to come together by instinct" (p. 288). If Manning seems more substantial in the company of Minister Holman than in the company of Holdsworth, it is because both Hope Farm and Manning himself are represented by Gaskell as outside of the social and capitalist world. The drawing on the dresser of the turnip-cutting machine represents the pure value of the turnip-cutting machine, not its potential exchange value. Minister Holman insists on pure representation, and like Manning he eschews superfluity, as is shown when Holdsworth remarks that he enjoys talking to the Minister: "really it is very wholesome exercise, this trying to make one's words represent one's thoughts" (p. 303). Holdsworth's usual mode of speech with its "random assertions and exaggerated expressions . . . merely looking to [his words'] effect on others" (p. 303) reveals his attitude to meaning as detachable and manipulable and, with his propensity to "talk a subject up," constitutes further evidence of his adaptation to a commercial environment.

The fourth scientist in "Cousin Phillis" is, of course, Paul Manning, the narrator. The reader hears little about Paul's own scientific ambitions, although the few details given indicate that he is conscientious: "I really had taken an interest in my work, nor would Mr. Holdsworth, indeed, have kept me in his employment if I had not given my mind as well as my time to it" (p. 275). His father remarks: "Thou'rt not great shakes, I know, in th' inventing line" (p. 290); the impression is that Paul is steady and unexceptional, and by finally marrying Miss Ellison he guarantees both his own professional future and the patrimony of the Manning name. Paul's work is largely that of an interpreter: he explains technical words to Minister Holman, and Phillis's interest in his railway work makes him "take more pains in using clear expressions" (p. 276). The novella is ostensibly concerned with the process of Paul's coming of age, both intellectually and sexually, but his centrality to his bildungsroman is challenged by his function as narator, as the interpreter of other, obscure signs.

The scene in which Manning draws the turnip-cutting machine on the dresser, along with the one in which Paul espies

the three I counted their heads, joined together in an eager group over Holdsworth's theodolite" (p. 308) both use science as the focus of an unorthodox grouping. The heads "joined together" are temporarily united by scientific enthusiasm. Yet there is a jarring note in these scenes of scientific community. Gaskell may fantasize that classes are reconciled over the theodolite, the turnip-cutter, or in Manning's friendship with Holdsworth, but she projects elsewhere all of the potential for disruption and damage that science also threatens. As in her earlier work, the female once again becomes the problematic site of transformation.

Looking at Manning's drawing of the turnip-cutting machine, Phillis is "leaning over and listening greedily, . . . sucking in information" (p. 289), and although her head is one of the three "joined together" over the theodolite, Paul says that "she had hardly time to greet me, so desirous was she to hear some answer to *her father's question*" (p. 308, emphasis added). Science is male, and exclusively so, and Phillis can only gratify her appetite for scientific knowledge by eavesdropping on male conversations. Unlike Sylvia she is hungry for "masculine news" (p. 294), but like Sylvia she has no control over her own "feminine" story. In her portrayal of Phillis, Gaskell is doing two things at once. On one hand she is engaging more explicitly than ever in the debate surrounding the social position and education of women, which was being exhaustively conducted in the periodical press in the late 1850s and 1860s. On the other hand she is using the representation of Phillis to resolve some of the ideological problems produced in the text by her portrayal of science and technological change.

An article in the *English Woman's Journal* in 1858, pleading for more educational opportunities and jobs for women, states: "Let woman put her shoulder to the slowly revolving wheel of progression, and she need not fear to be left behind, nor to be refused the countenance of her fellow-worker, man."[16] Certainly Phillis is trying to put her shoulder to the wheel, but she is constantly repelled by a culture of male exclusivity. Although

16. Anon., "Female Education in the Middle Classes," *English Woman's Journal* 1 (1858): 227.

Gaskell kept herself assiduously separate from the "strong-minded women" campaigning for women's rights in the 1860s, there is evidence in her letters that indicates a private admiration for their work and, indeed, personal acquaintance with a few of them.[17] However little she engaged with the organized radical opposition to "the established opinions of the world," Gaskell must have been aware of what those opinions consisted. Here, for instance, is W. R. Greg discussing womankind in his well-known 1850 article "Prostitution" in the *Westminster Review*:

> for ... the desire scarcely exists in a definite and conscious form till they *have* fallen. In this point there is a radical and essential difference between the sexes. ... In men, in general, the sexual desire is inherent and spontaneous, and belongs to the condition of puberty. In the other sex, the desire is dormant, if not non-existent, till excited; always till excited by undue familiarities. ...[18]

This is precisely the view of feminine passivity, here sexual but in Gaskell both sexual and intellectual, that she attacks in "Cousin Phillis." It seems, too, to be Minister Holman's view when he accuses Paul of "put[ting] such thoughts into the child's head."

[17] The most prominent was the "Langham Place" group of campaigners for women's rights. In 1857 Barbara Leigh Smith Bodichon and Bessie Rayner Parkes, who were both Unitarians, established what became the *English Woman's Review*. The *Review* shared its Langham Place offices with The Society for Promoting the Employment of Women, founded in 1859 and run by Jessie Boucherett. Barbara Bodichon went on to become one of the founders of Girton College, Cambridge, in the 1870s. Gaskell grudgingly admits in a 25 April 1860 letter to Charles Eliot Norton some admiration for Barbara Bodichon, although she seems to find it necessary to explain Bodichon's radicalism by her illegitimacy: "She is—I think in consequence of her birth, a strong fighter against the established opinions of the world,—which always goes against my—what shall I call it?—*taste*—(that is not the word,) but I can't help admiring her noble bravery and respecting—while I don't personally *like* her" (*Letters*, p. 607). Gaskell also seems to have been acquainted with Bessie Parkes, who, in a 25 October 1859 letter to Marianne Gaskell, she reports is coming to tea and "to want my judgment on something or other"—if her tone is somewhat irritable, she explains later in the same letter that "callers swallow up all my days" (*Letters*, pp. 902, 903). Gaskell's friend Harriet Martineau contributed an article to the debate. "Female Industry" appeared in the *Edinburgh Review*, 109 (1859), 293–336.

[18] [W. R. Greg], "Prostitution," *Westminster Review*, 53 (1850), 456–57. Greg adds: "We do not mean to say that uneasiness may not be felt—that health may not sometimes suffer; but there is no consciousness of the cause" (p. 457).

spoil[ing] her peaceful maidenhood" (p. 345), he assumes that Phillis is "dormant" (in Greg's phrase) just as Holdsworth likens her to the sleeping beauty: "I shall come back like a prince from Canada, and waken her to my love" (p. 315). It is only Paul and Phillis who "knew that the truth was different" (p. 345).

Realist writing depends on leaving clues or fragments from which the reader can reconstruct an entirety of meaning. "Cousin Phillis" is a detective novel, but it is a pathologized detective novel in which the detective is also the criminal. Paul certainly transgresses when he tells Phillis that Holdsworth loves her, but he is also the anxious detector of signs by which he—along with the reader—attempts to piece together the possible state of Phillis's invisible inner life. The signs are almost entirely somatic rather than psychological or verbal. Phillis's body becomes a theater where all of the activity and emotion that is denied free expression displays itself.

The somatic figuring of Phillis is pervasive in the narrative. Her "large, quiet eyes" and "white skin" (p. 266) are disturbed by Holdsworth's arrival, and at their introduction she is "blushing a little," "flushed," and "in a blushing hurry" (pp. 298–99). Later her eyes are "glad and bright," and a word from Holdsworth "called out her blushes" (p. 309); when Holdsworth draws her portrait "her colour came and went, her breath quickened" (p. 311). After Holdsworth's departure, Paul notices Phillis's "face white and set, her dry eyes"; she is "as pale as could be" and "looking so pale and weary" (pp. 317–18), and when she hears Paul read out a letter from Holdsworth, Paul notices "two spots of brilliant colour on the cheeks that had been so pale before" (p. 319). At chapel on Christmas day the gossips talk about the possibility of Phillis dying of "a decline" (p. 320); Paul sees that "her grey eyes looked hollow and sad; her complexion was of a dead white" (p. 320); in the kitchen he hears "a noise which made me pause and listen—a sob; an unmistakable, irrepressible sob" (p. 321). The pause, indicated here by a dash on the page, dramatizes Paul's detective activity and implicates the reader as witness. This is the climax of the mystery for Paul the detective, although not of course for the reader, who has been patiently assembling not only the clues about Phillis's

state of mind but also those that indicate that Paul's own inexperience makes him an unreliable narrator. The vital clue for Paul is the book containing Holdsworth's margin notes: "Could that be it? Could that be the cause of her white looks, her weary eyes, her wasted figure, her struggling sobs?" (p. 322). This is a clue that reveals Phillis's inner life to Paul "like a flash of lightning on a dark night" (p. 322), yet Phillis continues to express nothing verbally, and it is only through somatic symptoms that Paul reads her happiness when he tells her that Holdsworth loves her: "Her eyes, glittering with tears as they were, expressed an almost heavenly happiness" (p. 324). Part Four opens with "the chapel-gossips complimenting cousin Holman on her daughter's blooming looks" (p. 325), and Paul notes that Phillis's "state of vivid happiness this summer was markedly different to the peaceful serenity of former days" (p. 329). After Paul tells Phillis of Holdsworth's marriage to Lucille Ventadour, her parents continue to read Phillis's symptoms as purely physical, and her mother interprets her show of temper as a reaction to the stormy weather. It is the servant, Betty, who reads the truth of the symptoms: "you've likely never heared of a fever-flush . . . What makes her come in panting and ready to drop into that chair" (p. 336). When Holdsworth's letter arrives with the public announcement of his marriage, "her face was brilliantly flushed, her eyes were dry and glittering" (p. 339). Paul reports the pathological signs of Phillis's reaction in minute detail:

> But once my eyes fell upon her hands, concealed under the table, and I could see the passionate, convulsive manner in which she laced and interlaced her fingers perpetually, wringing them together from time to time, wringing till the compressed flesh became perfectly white. . . . I wondered that others did not read these signs as clearly as I did. (p. 342)

After Phillis confesses her love for Holdsworth to her father, Paul notes Minister Holman's failure to notice Phillis's symptoms: "her beautiful eyes dilated with a painful, tortured expression. He went on, without noticing the look on her face; he did not see it, I am sure" (p. 346). Then comes the collapse which throws both Minister Holman and Paul into silence—

"I pointed to the quivering of the muscles round her mouth" (p. 347)—and the subsequent brain fever.

I have quoted at such length because I think Gaskell's portrayal of Phillis almost exclusively through somatic symptoms is quite extraordinary. She achieves two things by this sustained treatment of Phillis's repressed subjectivity. First, by pathologizing her heroine within her narrative Gaskell demonstrates radically and effectively the pressure under which women are placed by the lack of permitted expressions of subjectivity. Phillis says very little in the novella, and less and less as it proceeds. "I loved him, father!" (p. 346) is the first expression of her selfhood that she is permitted, and it is figured as transgressive nevertheless. Thus Gaskell uses her representation of Phillis to illustrate the pathologization of women by a mid-nineteenth-century society that, literally, makes them ill.

The second achievement of this sustained pathologization of Phillis relates to the male community of scientists. All of them, despite their remarkable scientific gifts, fail Phillis in various ways. Holdsworth fails her by underestimating her and by allowing himself to ignore the pain that he knows he has caused her by lazily relying on the "established opinions" that characterize women as passive sleeping beauties. Minister Holman fails repeatedly and obstinately to read his daughter's symptoms as signs of an independent subjectivity. Manning "reads" Phillis only in terms of another woman—"poor Molly," who pined away for love of him many years before—or as a potential wife for Paul. He reinforces the "established opinions" that militate against female subjectivity when he assures Paul that marriage and children would cure Phillis of Latin and Greek (p. 292). Paul himself, although he reads Phillis almost obsessively closely, does not always read her correctly. And he fails her most disastrously when, albeit in an effort to comfort her, he misjudges the effect and miscalculates the risk of telling her about Holdsworth's "love" for her.

Then science has failed all of them in diagnosing Phillis as a subject. Science, for Gaskell, still does not fit life sufficiently enough to be useful. The men examine and understand the mechanisms of turnip-cutters, drive wheels, winches, and railway tracks in minute detail, but the hidden mechanisms of the

woman who sits beside them receive no attention, even when she seriously begins to show dysfunction. Paul is the exception of course, but his attempted reading of Phillis leads him to an act that ultimately causes more pain. He knows the facts and he sees the symptoms, but he fails to infer adequately Phillis's inner life from them. His naive assumption is that Phillis can be "mended" by the information he gives her.

The whole plot of "Cousin Phillis" can be reconstructed from its appearance on Phillis's body. The novella, with its physical and somatic dramatization for the reader of the business of diagnosis, of paying close attention to signs, is a supremely realist narrative. Phillis's body becomes the site of radical transformations, projected by Gaskell away from the scientific-industrial plot. Catherine Belsey remarks that illness in nineteenth-century realist fiction is used as a strategy to express "the problem of change it symbolises."[19] Certainly the problem of social change seems to be symbolized through Phillis. That science and the scientific man have disrupted her story and caused her pain and suffering is manifestly present in the novella in a way that the pain of class friction and social change are not. And Phillis's resolution to adjust to that change is offered as the resolution of the narrative as a whole. "She blushed a little as she faltered out her wish for change of thought and scene" (p. 354). At last Phillis speaks, and makes a demand. It is true that she also blushes, but only "a little." "Her wish for change" carries the ideological burden of the story, and that she chooses to go to Manning for her change is perhaps less significant than that she chooses to go to urban, industrial Birmingham.[20] Her final, paradoxical remark—"Then—we will go back to the peace

[19] *Critical Practice* (London: Methuen, 1980), p. 74.

[20] The published ending was not the one that Gaskell originally intended. As is revealed by two unpublished letters from Gaskell to George Smith (10 December 186[illegible], MS Acc 6713/2/4, National Library of Scotland; reprinted in J. A. V. Chapple, "Elizabeth Gaskell: Two Unpublished Letters to George Smith," *Etudes Anglaises*, 33 [1980], 183–87). In the originally intended ending, Paul, [illegible] married, returns years later to find Heathbridge struck by typhus, and comes across Phillis using Holdsworth's old sketches to help her drain the marshy land. She is running her father's farm and has adopted two orphaned children, but she has never married. This putative ending could be read conventionally as a fable of loyalty to the memory of true love, or it could be read more radically as a male-less fantasy of female reproductive and productive self-sufficiency.

of the old days. I know we shall, I can, and I will!" (p. 354)—demonstrates the irreversible change that has taken place in Phillis; "the peace of the old days" depended on her willlessness. Now that she has spoken herself into subjectivity, the peace of the old days will never return.

In "Cousin Phillis" Gaskell substitutes Phillis's pain for the pain of class division, social change, and the new science. By presenting a fantasized class reconciliation, particularly through the representation of the relationship between Holdsworth and Manning, the text disguises and evades confrontation of actual class tensions. But, by closely reading Phillis's extraordinarily detailed somatic symptoms, the reader is able to reconstruct the repressed narrative of pain underlying the story—a powerful pain that breaks beyond the conventions of the romantic plot in order to reflect Gaskell's own troubled response to rapid social change and the iniquitous divisions between both classes and sexes that, she seems to suggest, can be numbered among its results.

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Flirtations in Early James

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> "The manners of young people to each other are very different from what they were in my day. One doesn't know whether they mean nothing or everything."
>
> —Henry James, "The Story of a Masterpiece" (1868)

"A Tragedy of Error" (1864), the first of Henry James's short stories to be published, opens with this typically Jamesian situation:

> A low English phaeton was drawn up before the door of the post office of a French seaport town. In it was seated a lady, with her veil down and her parasol held closely over her face. My story begins with a gentleman coming out of the office and handing her a letter.[1]

What makes the scene typical of James's work are the international, European elements (an *English* phaeton in a *French* town), the central female character whose psychic life remains something of a mystery (her veil and parasol symbolize this fact), the curious intrusion of a narrative voice that never identifies itself, remaining aloof and somewhat formal, and the multiple

[1] Henry James, "A Tragedy of Error," in *The Tales of Henry James: Volume One 1864–1869*, ed. Maqbool Aziz (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1973), p. 1. Further references to the tales (unless otherwise noted) are to this edition and appear in the text. "A Tragedy of Error" appeared anonymously in the February 1864 issue of *The Continental Monthly* 5 (1864): 204–16.

complications posed for the lady by the simultaneous arrival of a gentleman and a letter. In *The Portrait of a Lady* (1881) Isabel Archer is interrupted in her reading of Caspar Goodwood's letter by the arrival of Lord Warburton at Gardencourt. She must hear the advances of a present suitor with the echoes of a former suitor resonating in her mind. The lady in James's first story, it turns out, is married to the writer of the letter and having an affair with the gentleman who delivers it. "A Tragedy of Error" shows young James already in possession of the plot structures that make his later work compelling, already attuned to the psychological complexities of courtship and love, and already aware of how these complexities generate stories. The tale is admittedly sensational and vulgar by the standards of its author's maturity (the lady hires a boatman to murder her husband), but the sources of its interest for young James's imagination, and the depth and darkness of motives gradually revealed beneath the serene surface of a highly civilized domestic life, do not change radically in the course of his career. His interest merely grows more intense. He discovers a fictional form and a prose style that embody his fascinations.[2]

The redoubtable "late style" that now serves as James's signature is usually considered an invention of his later "middle" period (roughly from the *The Bostonians* [1886] to *The Spoils of Poynton* [1897]). The late style is thought to mark, first, James's abandonment of the theater, return to the novel, and application of theatrical principles to fictional narrative; second, his increasing reliance on dictation when composing; and third, a change of mode from unsuccessful realism to more experimental and symbolic romance.[3] But while the texture and structure of the later novels clearly extend the principles of his earlier fiction, they reveal no radical departure from James's original

See Gordon O. Taylor, *The Passages of Thought: Psychological Representation in the American Novel, 1870–1900* (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1969), pp. 42–84, for a [illegible] account of James's arrival at his later style by way of an interest in the process of thought which Taylor finds as early as *Roderick Hudson* (1876).

For the first of these characteristics, see Leon Edel's discussion of *The Spoils of Poynton* in *Henry James: The Treacherous Years, 1895–1901* (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott, 1969), pp. 161–68. For the second, see the opening chapters of Hugh Kenner's *The Pound Era* (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1971). For the third, see Richard H. Brodhead, *The School of Hawthorne* (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1986), pp. 166–200.

motives as a writer. More important, the early stories ground James's stylistic concerns in scenes of courtship flirtation, providing us with a way to trace the ambiguities of modern fiction to changes in Anglo-American manners. A child and student of his culture, James sought to give something back to it: a language for its increasingly dense and mystifying emotional life, the verbal equivalent of its domestic psychology, especially its psychology of erotic love. Nearly all of the tales written before the publication of his first novel, *Watch and Ward* (1871), have as their subject some difficult phase of courtship or some disturbance in a marriage. In the Jamesian universe, "my story begins" with love at risk, with the future of a particular erotic entanglement momentarily in suspense while its participants renegotiate their relation to each other. If, as Ruth Bernard Yeazell has suggested, the period of courtship—with "the narrative possibilities implicit in all its paradoxes of anticipation and delay"—"became the special province of the English novel" in the nineteenth century, then James made his American intervention in the history of the novel by refining its understanding of courtship.[1]

Already in the early work of James, courtship is a phase of life that produces a certain state of mind; it requires acute perception of the whole moral and physical makeup of another being for the purpose of critical decision making. Courtship involves a tense, metaphysical uncertainty no less than awkward social encounters, for it temporarily annuls familiar boundaries between persons, forcing them to imagine—possibly even to test—various redrawings of those boundaries. None of these imaginings may be voiced explicitly, however, lest one commit oneself (or reject a possibility) prematurely. James reveals courtship to be a crucial juncture in the formation of identity, during which one's erotic desires must be interpreted even as they seem to grow less intelligible. Neat distinctions between

[1] Ruth Bernard Yeazell, *Fictions of Modesty: Women and Courtship in the English Novel* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1991), p. 30. In her brief discussion of *The Awkward Age* Yeazell suggests that James saw opportunities for the study of consciousness in the English novel's courtship plots (see pp. 77–80). My present purpose is to complicate this view somewhat by showing that courtship had always been James's subject and that he had first explored it in American settings.

one's own desires and those of a lover begin to evaporate. One becomes saturated, as it were, with contrary ideas about oneself, some of which have originated in another mind. Jamesian courtship lays bare the disturbingly intersubjective nature of self-making.

Knowing, moreover, how thrilling this emotional vertigo can be, James translates it in his fiction to the experience of reading, placing the reader in an exquisitely unfamiliar space of desire and estrangement, curiosity and fear very like the one in which his lovers entertain their prospects.[5] James encodes his hermeneutic understanding of courtship into the very fabric of his tales by reenacting courtship movements (Yeazell's "anticipation and delay") for and upon the reader. To read James is to become highly aware of authorial subterfuge and the sallies of imagination he requires of the reader. Readers who infer meanings are put in the position of his would-be suitors, kept at a safe remove from the text's inner life. The rhetorical mode of James's fiction—its ambiguity, delicacy, and indirection, as well as its concentration on bottomless depths of character—in short, the features that distinguish his modernist from his Victorian traits—are derived in large part from the courtship dialect of genteel Anglo-Americans, mainly women. Modernist self-consciousness owes as much to an evolving domestic sphere as it does to philosophical skepticism or to French Symbolism or to Freud.[6] Indeed, a certain skepticism about love may be said to mark the modern era as it was interpreted by James.[7] He advanced the modern temper by applying pressure

The tension between James's wish for intimacy and his wish for privacy has been traced by Barbara Hochman to broader cultural anxieties about a growing mass readership in late nineteenth-century America hungry for knowledge about writers' private lives. See "Disappearing Authors and Resentful Readers in Late Nineteenth-Century American Fiction: The Case of Henry James," *ELH* 63 (1996): 177–201.

A similar argument has recently been made by Paula Bennett in reference to women's poetry. Postbellum women poets, says Bennett, anticipated the modern lyric by breaking with the tradition of sentimental writing about love. See "The Descent of the Angel: Interrogating Domestic Ideology in American Women's Poetry, 1858–1890," *American Literary History* 7 (1995): 591–610.

Stanley Cavell gives another powerful interpretation of skepticism as an "avoidance of love" in *Must We Mean What We Say? A Book of Essays* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1969). See also his *Disowning Knowledge: In Six Plays of Shakespeare* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1987) and *Pursuits of Happiness: The Hollywood Comedy of Remarriage* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1981).

to Victorian complacencies about love and domestic relations-pressure he learned from observing women in love.[8]

Of the early tales, "A Most Extraordinary Case" (186 makes most explicit the resemblance between courtship (a understood by women) and interpretation (as understood b James). The protagonist, Colonel Mason, is a Civil War vetera recovering from his wounds in a New York hotel. He is visite by his aunt, Mrs. Mason, who proposes that he come to he house on the Hudson to recuperate under the care of herse and her niece (unrelated to Mason by blood), Caroline Ho mann. The reader familiar with James already expects a rel tionship to develop between Mason and Hofmann, but this ta reminds us that the original context of Jamesian courtship w the post–Civil War Reconstruction of America.[9] Long befor Basil Ransom of *The Bostonians* (and far in advance of Heming way's Nick Adams), Mason broods over the aimlessness of h life in a mood of somber skepticism. "Until Mrs. Mason disco ered me," he tells the doctor brought in to tend him, "my ca cass had become quite too miserable to be an object worth li ing for" (*Tales*, p. 233). Mason considers himself an able schol "but a great dunce in certain social matters. He was quite igno rant of all those lighter and more evanescent forms of conviv ality attached to being somebody's son, brother, or cousi (p. 235). His aunt will be his instructor in these "evanesce forms" of familial relatedness; she will "teach him the meani of the adjective *domestic*" (p. 235). For the soldier returnin from the desolate, masculine domain of war, domestic relatio appear as a kind of foreign language, or at any rate as an ethe real expansion of one's own language into pressures finer tha language, expressible only by emphasis. The task of educatin

[8] In this respect James anticipates Freud. A suggestive account of their affinities and differences as "readers" of women may be found in Neil Hertz, "Dora's Secrets, Freud's Techniques," in *In Dora's Case: Freud—Hysteria—Feminism*, ed. Charles Bernheimer and Claire Kahane (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1985), pp. 221–42.

[9] The best recent account of this context for James's writing is Alfred Habeg *Henry James and the "Woman Business"* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 198 Habegger's early chapters on Henry James Sr. and on women writers are highly ill minating, but the chapter "The Return of the Father in *The Bostonians*" (pp. 182 makes assertions about the novelist's deep psyche that, though entertaining, are hard verifiable.

military men in these subtilized rhetorical codes of domestic life, then, falls to their female relatives.

Scholars tend to view "domestic" fiction as primarily a woman's genre in the nineteenth century,[10] but insofar as James (or for that matter Hawthorne before him) takes for his subject the moral and emotional vicissitudes of courtship and marriage, he may be called a domestic-fiction writer. If James seems not to fit that designation, it is because his interest in the lightness and evanescence of domestic relations (rather than their hearty nourishment and pious augmentation) works its way into his prose as an unemotional quietness, a gently understated meandering of the narrative voice, barely expressive of its purposes—if purpose is not too strong a word for an agency slightly more attenuated.[11] What is notable about this quietness, though, is the way it attempts to imitate, in its effects on the reader, the pleasant ease of certain women's graciousness—especially when it takes that ease for its theme:

> Mason knew so little, from direct observation, of the *vie intime* of elegant, intelligent women, that their habits, their manners, their household motions, their principles, possessed in his view all the charm of a spectacle,—a spectacle which he contemplated with the indolence of an invalid, the sympathy of a man of taste, and a little of the awkwardness which women gladly allow, and indeed provoke, in a soldier, for the pleasure of forgiving it. It was a very simple matter to Miss Hofmann that she should be dressed in fresh crisp muslin, that her hands should be white and her attitudes felicitous; she had long since made her peace with these things. But to Mason, who was familiar only with books and men, they were objects of constant, half-dreamy contemplation. He would sit for half an hour at once, with a book on his knees and

10. See, for instance, such influential studies as Nancy Armstrong, *Desire and Domestic Fiction: A Political History of the Novel* (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1987), and Mary Kelley, *Private Woman, Public Stage: Literary Domesticity in Nineteenth-Century America* (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1984).

11. As early as 1867 one of James's reviewers pointed out his tendency "to dwell upon the complexities of feeling which arise when women and men are thrown into relations with each other *not of love* [illegible] which for one or another reason cannot work freely" (from the *Nation*, 28 February 1867, repr. in *Tales*, Appendix II, p. 512; emphasis added).

> the pages unturned, scrutinizing with ingenious indirectness the simple mass of colours and contours which made up the physical personality of Miss Hofmann. (*Tales*, p. 238)

The passage goes on to describe Hofmann's physique in greater detail, but the desire she arouses in Mason remains indolent and contemplative, almost infantile in its lack of focus ("the simple mass of colours and contours"). The "*vie intime*" of cultivated women, first sensed by Mason in the "perfume" of his aunt's "sober elegance and her cordial good-nature" (p. 230), exists beyond women's bodies, in the atmosphere they produce. And it is precisely in its atmospheric qualities that prose can lead the reader into the "*vie intime*," by achieving, in diction and in rhythm, an intangible, supple compliance with the delight of the inner ear.

James's paean to feminine artfulness is not without irony. It shows Hofmann's charms acting as a sedative to Mason's troubled mind, seducing him without intention. James is preparing him for the waking to fuller consciousness that awaits all of the novelist's protagonists. As Hofmann plays the piano for him one lazy afternoon, Mason, "from the perfect equilibrium of his senses" (p. 239), dozes off. (The Jamesian piano—later played by Madame Merle and later still by Charlotte Stant—is chiefly an instrument of treachery.) Mason sleeps "manfully"—an odd, perhaps defensive insertion, though probably an indication that he has nearly been restored to full, manly health, to "perfect equilibrium." Alas, his "transition to consciousness" (p. 240) is met with a slight upset: the sight of a gentleman lingering over Hofmann, his back to Mason. Mason's "observation was quickened by the fact that the picture before him was animated by no sound of voices," and he finds the silence "unnatural, or, at the least, disagreeable" (p. 240). When the gentleman turns around, Mason recognizes his physician, Dr. Knight, and he decides that the doctor and Hofmann had merely "been trying to decipher a difficult piece of music" in earnest silence (p. 240). The reader does not buy his explanation, perhaps because Hofmann's musical skill has already assumed erotic undertones (Mason's "manful" sleep is vaguely postcoital), perhaps because powers of deciphering, like Mason's

"quickened" observation of the soundless picture of man and woman, seem in this fictional world to be motivated by emotional needs rather than technical curiosity, perhaps because the musical interest shared by Mason's medical advisers suggests deep congruencies in their characters and constitutes a formidable bond. From this moment we observe with pity the lag of Mason's knowledge behind his intuition. He has not learned all of the meanings of the adjective *domestic*.

Mason wakens to the legibility of domestic silences when he begins to admit to himself an interest in Hofmann and announces (to Dr. Knight) his "positive wish to recover" (p. 240). (Milly Theale will follow a similar sequence with Densher in *The Wings of the Dove* [1902].) The dependence of his physical health on his hopefulness as a suitor is made clear by a spell of nausea that overcomes him when, out of nervous fear, he turns down a chance to attend a party with Hofmann. The heyday of American neurasthenia was still to come, but already James hints at the possibility of a thoroughly psychosomatic illness as plausible in men as in women. When Dr. Knight describes the party to Mason afterward, praising rather fervidly Hofmann's "magnificent organization," Mason chooses not "to weigh his words" but instead to hear them as echoing a nascent impression in his own mind: "He must be a strong man who would approach her. . . . Her soul is an instrument of a hundred strings; only it takes a strong hand to draw sound" (p. 245). One wishes James were even more critically distinct from Mason than he clearly is here (the narrator calls Mason's love "patient, discreet, and modest,—almost timid"), but James's sympathy shows just how challenging it was for the young writer to disentangle his romantic moods from the unflinching realism he sought in his art. Mason's slack recumbency, earlier the source of his insight into Hofmann's quiet music, now must be overcome. Regaining his strength and health, he will only improve his ear for her communicability (which remains a rather enigmatic notion though one persistent in James's work, as we will see). The health and blessing of courtship lie in the state of attunement it requires of one soul toward another. Mason's momentary decline and recovery in response to thoughts of Hofmann indicate a tightening of his own heartstrings.

Having planted in the reader's mind a suspicion of Hofmann's attachment to the doctor and a concern for Mason's vulnerable affection toward her, James embarks securely on the tale's most memorable scene: Mason and Hofmann's impromptu drive in the country. Hofmann agrees to take her aunt's place as Mason's escort, and the couple set off in search of a clear view of the Hudson. Stopping at a German household, they leave their horse and follow a young German boy down to a prospect of the Catskills and the river. The still recovering Mason rests while "Miss Hofmann released from her grasp the skirts which she had gathered up in her passage from the phaeton, and strolled to the edge of the cliff, where she stood for some moments talking with her little guide. Mason could only hear that she was speaking German" (p. 247). The skirts will reappear shortly, but I would call attention to the way Hofmann's dallying with the German boy on the ominous "edge of the cliff" darkens Mason's view of her liberty. His hearing has already been strained by the silence between Hofmann and Dr. Knight; her German excludes him yet again, to his (barely concealed) exasperation. "There I can't follow you!" Mason almost whines when the little boy proclaims "I speak German" (p. 248). Hofmann switches tactfully to French in order to assuage Mason, reestablishing between them an intimate discourse undisturbed by the boy. But the damage is done. "To think," says Mason, "that that little youngster should forbid us the use of two languages!" (p. 248). The mounting rage in his speech is persuasive only because it is so irrational. Mason seems disgusted with himself for feeling jealousy toward a child—which he nevertheless feels. The boy's knowledge of "two languages," German and English, forbids Mason's use of them to maintain a possessive intimacy with Hofmann. James the cosmopolite understands how languages, like domestic spaces, can house people together familiarly, divide them sensibly, or cruelly bar their association. Hofmann's facility with various languages broadens her range of access to different kinds of men along with their undisclosed personal lives. In case we miss the point, it quickly finds a more literal expression. The boy offers to escort Hofmann down to the water, and the invalid Mason grumbles, "There I can't follow you either" (p. 248).

It is to James's credit that the scene unfolds much less clumsily than it might. Mason's jealousy, because it is so irrational, becomes apparent to the reader only gradually. Once we sense it, we observe him spying on Hofmann from a distance, and we read her gestures in a double light: casual indifference to Mason from *our* perspective, and taunting indifference to him from *his*. Thus she sits beside the box "with her hat in her lap, twisting the feather in her fingers" (p. 248), an absent-minded habit. But to Mason that feather is a means of erotic torment, "twisting" his mood. When he catches "the tones of her voice wafted upward as if she were gently singing," he begins to sulk: "Confound her German!" (p. 248). Hofmann must be legible before she can be eligible; failure to comprehend her is tantamount to losing her. Mason's desperation proceeds from his beloved's indecipherable self-possession. James casts the soldier's urge to decipher as a (typically masculine) demand for reciprocated love, in no uncertain terms. Repressing this demand would require an equal self-possession that Mason cannot muster, as we see in his exchange with Hoffman upon her return:

> "You *have* torn your dress," said Mason.
> Miss Hofmann surveyed her drapery. "Where, if you please?"
> "There,—in front." And Mason extended his walking-stick and inserted it into the injured fold of muslin. There was a certain graceless *brusquerie* in the movement which attracted Miss Hofmann's attention. (p. 248)

In his maturity James would have considered the scene itself graceless, for rarely do his characters affront each other with such frankly sexual malice. Resorting to the French *brusquerie* cannot quite conceal it. The skirts that earlier Hofmann had too carelessly "released" are imagined by Mason as symbols of her erotic integrity (penetrated second-hand by his walking stick—the symbol, no doubt, of his insufficiency). Hofmann, though, recovers her dignity with a tight-lipped revision of

Mason's utterly bizarre show of jealousy earns him a place alongside American literature's other impotent misogynists: Hawthorne's Roger Chillingworth and Faulkner's Popeye Doyle.

Mason's allegory, a realist's account concerned with materi facts "it's easily mended" (p 248) She wisely deflects Mason hymenal insinuation by playing dumb to his tone

The tension created by men and women who accuse eac other *implicitly*, relying on the surplus charge of tone to conve suspicion and resentment through masks of civility, is an effec that James will first perfect in *The Europeans* (1878) and pui i classic use in *The Portrait of a Lady* Those books associate civili with Europe, American characters learn to speak with a rich ness of implication by mimicking their cousins across th ocean Before James discovered Europe as the *terra incognita* o American authorship, however, he was perfectly capable o drawing an American woman already educated to an artful ci vility Courtship manners, which are naturally complicated b international travel, provided the subject for James's art from its inception and remained his first interest even in his interna tional phase His artistic life was haunted by the idea of "man neredness"—in its feminine and later European guises—as feature of lovers' speech and rhetoric[1] "A Most Extraordinar Case" shows James in full (if unrefined) awareness of the un dercurrents of meaning generated by a genteel reserve "It wa his tone, his attitude, his eyes that were fully significant, rathe than his words" (p 249) Hofmann responds to those media o personal intention in Mason that she herself knows how to ma nipulate In the *vie intime* of intelligent women, manners fortif and qualify ordinary language, bringing to speech-acts a whole range of bodily expressions with minute semantic values fo the initiated The process by which one becomes initiated a Colonel Mason does, and the passively aggressive sparring and information gathering undertaken by initiates (always for th

[1] The classic studies of manners in James are Frederick C Crews *The Tragedy of Manners Moral Drama in the Later Novels of Henry James* (New Haven Yale Univ Pr 1957) Richard Poirier *The Comic Sense of Henry James A Study of the Early Novels* (L don Chatto and Windus 1960) and Laurence Bedell Holland *The Expense of V Essays on the Craft of Henry James* (Princeton Princeton Univ Press 1964) None of the treat the early stories but Holland's chapter on "The Makers of Manners" (pp 7- also links "manners" as social behavior with "manners" of writing both of which H land finds highly theatrical in America The effects of this theatricality on love rel have not to my knowledge been measured

sake of love or money), supply James with inexhaustible materials for his fiction.

What has been said of James's art of courtship thus far applies no less to his precursors Richardson and Austen, George Eliot, and some of Hawthorne (Zenobia, the most subtle of Hawthorne's female characters, was predictably James's favorite).[14] But many readers have noticed James's purposeful diversion from this line. In James the narrative voice and the editorial eye are themselves given to self-conscious evasions of the reader—"slips, lapses, omissions, falsehoods and indecipherable moments," in the words of Allon White—that depart systematically from the English novel's standards of intelligibility.[15] There is a greater self-consciousness in James about the manner of the author toward the reader—how artificial its familiarities are, how too-neatly trusting. Fiction writers *make* their work morally digestible; that knowledge, the basis of fiction's social importance for a writer like Jane Austen, strikes James (and to a lesser extent Hawthorne) as a polite conspiracy, if not outright falsification.[16] James is attracted to innocence as a sub-

14. See James's discussion of *The Blithedale Romance* in *Hawthorne*, in Henry James, *Literary Criticism: Essays on Literature, American Writers, English Writers*, ed. Leon Edel (New York: Library of America, 1984), pp. 420–22 (hereafter referred to as *Literary Criticism*). His praise is unusually warm: "The finest thing in *The Blithedale Romance* is the character of Zenobia, which strikes me as the nearest approach that Hawthorne has made to the complete creation of a *person*" (p. 420).

15. See *The Uses of Obscurity: The Fiction of Early Modernism* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1981), pp. 72–73. White posits an extension of hermeneutics into social relationship in early modernist fiction, such that the perspicuity of the novelist's language—his examples are James, Meredith, and Conrad—is compromised by the emergence of "games of concealment" (pp. 72–73). White acknowledges his debt to George Steiner's brief yet magisterial history of speech in the novel since Austen (see Steiner, "Eros and Idiom," in his *On Difficulty and Other Essays* [New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1978], pp. 95–136). According to Steiner, James's *The Portrait of a Lady* is "a reprise of *Middlemarch*, in which we are meant to observe the strenuous tactics of exclusion of sexual realities rather than the beneficent reabsorption of eros into society" (p. 107). James's reprise augurs "a new relationship between language and the sexual imagination" (p. 108)—which, I would add, Sigmund Freud will designate "repression."

16. Hawthorne's rhetorical relation to the American reading public might best be described as ambivalent: sometimes arch ("The Custom-House" and portions of *The Blithedale Romance*) while at other times solemn (the ending of *The House of the Seven Gables* and much of *The Marble Faun*). He eludes the taxonomist. Poe and Melville of course fully anticipate James's modernist diffidence. D. H. Lawrence made much of

ject in part because he is the most calculating of writers, and he suspects his readers of calculations nearly as deep. Civility is beginning to feel false rather than edifying by James's time, and its discontents will soon begin the modern rush for authentic expression that characterizes the first half of our century.[17]

The indeterminacies of meaning that James introduces to courtship manners and, by extension, to the reading of fiction are not foreign to the scene of courtship in America but rather are endemic to it. European manners first attract young James because they enrich, subtilize, and complicate courtship in meaningful ways. American manners, on the other hand, grow out of no mutually understood social dialect; they are improvised and patchy, and they may stymie an interpreter like Colonel Mason with a blank refusal to signify. As such an interpreter himself, James, in turn, gives his reader no more help than his hero has had. Thus in "A Most Extraordinary Case" we find James shying away from assertions about Caroline Hofmann's state of mind in the aftermath of the skirt episode. "It is a delicate question whether Miss Hofmann now ceased to be perplexed," says the narrator, about Mason's interest in her (p. 249). And again: "I repeat that I do not undertake to follow Miss Hofmann's feelings; I only know that her words were those of a woman of great instincts" (p. 250). For the remainder of the tale the narrator prudently denies any access to Hofmann's thoughts that cannot be inferred from her manner. James's coyness pays tribute to Hofmann's own—"charity," says the narrator of her silence toward Mason, "is nothing if not discreet" (p. 249)—and the apparent collusion between Hofmann and the narrator leaves the reader guessing about her along with Mason, who suffers a relapse from health.

the fact in *Studies in Classic American Literature* [New York: Penguin, 1977]); but the narratives rarely treat courtship in any but pathological forms.

[17] See Lionel Trilling's account of this historical shift, especially the embracing of Freud in the twentieth century, in *Sincerity and Authenticity* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1972), chapter 6. More recently, in her cultural history of 1920s Manhattan, Ann Douglas has shown that the modern American ethos of "histrionic truthness" owed much to the Viennese psychoanalyst (see *Terrible Honesty: Mongrel* [illegible] *in the 1920s* [New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1995], chapters 1 and 3).

Mason begins to worsen after Hofmann's engagement to Dr. Knight is announced. On his deathbed he makes a will that leaves the bulk of his patrimony to the doctor. (Here in its first manifestation is the sacrificial gesture so central to James's imagination, forerunner to Ralph Touchett's and Milly Theale's fundings of other people's loves.) Our knowledge of Mason's beneficence is still fresh when Hofmann pays her last call to him and agrees to see him alone. Their brief interview, from which Hofmann emerges "with her face pale and discomposed" (p. 261), ends with Mason's death, concludes the tale, and remains something of a mystery to the reader. Again we have only the evidence of Hofmann's complexion, as well as her "very silent and thoughtful" manner (p. 261), upon which to base an account of their talk. Presumably he has informed her of his will. Is she unsettled by his magnanimity? Does he profess love for her? Does she recognize him as something more than an unwelcome suitor? Having initiated his reader into the *vie intime*, James provokes that reader now to read through his characters' manners, to make meaning of surfaces not quite transparent. He puts the reader in the very strange position of knowing that something "extraordinary" has happened without having any reliable evidence for interpreting it. ("The Figure in the Carpet" [1896] and "The Turn of the Screw" [1898] are similarly frustrating in their concerns.) Hofmann's fiancé, Dr. Knight, twice calls Mason's rapid decline "a most extraordinary case" (pp. 260, 261); this invocation of the title by one who is even more excluded than the reader from Hofmann and Mason's parting has the singular effect of putting the reader, by contrast, relatively "in the know." Mason's death becomes an event with degrees of intelligibility: a medical anomaly to Dr. Knight and Mrs. Mason, its *vie intime* is penetrated somewhat by the reader but ultimately is known only to the victim and his witness. One senses that Mason's half-gracious, half-triumphal bowing out of Hofmann's life is his only way of leaving an impression on her. He repays her friendship in kind: he, too, can rise to inscrutable decency. In a one-upmanship of charitable acts, he takes his place alongside her in the ranks of domestic nobility, where beauty is almost competitive. But all

of this remains speculation, for Hofmann's manner at the e
can communicate only so much of her knowledge and feelin
Just how much is the question that young James pursues in l
reticent art, as his characters do in their courtship

Throughout the early stories there are sig
that James understood his own fictional "manner" as a r
flection of his characters' manners and that he valued tl
likeness "'Upon my soul,'" Colonel Mason declares when l
learns of the doctor's engagement, "'they're an accomplishe
couple!' Glancing back at his friend's constant reserve and se
possession, [Mason]—strange as it may seem—could not r
press a certain impulse of sympathetic admiration" (p 25
"Reserve" and "self-possession" are traits belonging to Jame
narrator as well, who has carefully monitored the leak of info
mation about the doctor's interest to a reader only slight
more discerning than Mason. In this fictional world (for re
sons I will pursue shortly), reserve and self-possession appe
to be inherently worthy of our admiration James, as if appr
hensive about our missing this point, has Mason complime
Dr Knight on his secretive craft

> "I don't congratulate you on doing it," [Mason] said
> much as on the way you've done it"
>
> "What do you know about the way?" asked Knight
>
> "Nothing whatever That's just it You took good care of that
>
> (p 256)

Mason has learned enough about manners to put aside his jea
ousy and to appreciate—from an artistic point of view—a
"extraordinary case" of tact He appreciates the way the coup
have conducted their courtship a discreet management o
strong attractions and warm emotions that helps to elevate tl
experience of love (and its fictions) from the bog of sentimen
talism, in accordance with the new, realist mood of the postbe
lum era [18] Even a soldier might value the *vie intime* on these di

[18] Even in a writer like Rebecca Harding Davis whose realism of subject matt
James appreciated he could not abide what he called ultra-sentimentalism "Spont
neous pity is an excellent emotion but there is nothing so hardening as to have you

cretionary terms, so James seems to suggest. By singing the praises, if ever so quietly, of his cultivated, intelligent women and tactful men, young James can broaden the meaning of the adjective *domestic* to include lovers (and readers) of both sexes. One of the ways that James transforms the themes of popular American fiction into matter for "fine" art is by muting the love story—subjecting it to analysis, suffusing it with ambiguity, and darkening its mood. He puts a premium on self-control in fiction and manners as a means of communicating without asserting, being significant without being obvious.

But as we have seen, the intelligent manners of James and his characters are sometimes neither communicative nor in full control of their significance. They express deep uncertainty about the proper course of love: how much to conceal or reveal, whether to be serious or humorous, how safely one may voice sincerities (if indeed one feels them at all). Courtship doubts infect the narrator's and characters' voices in some of these tales with a coyness that approaches incoherence. By making very light and contradictory claims on others' feelings, James and his characters re-create the erotic thrill of flirtation in the more intellectual experiences of ambiguity, complexity, and subtlety. His success in this mode has been both misunderstood and overrated.[19] As Wayne C. Booth puts it, "not the greatest ironic ambiguity but *lucidity within complexity* is James's goal."[20] To fathom complexity requires a strength of mind rather than a

pits for ever tickled and stimulated, and nothing so debasing as to become an agent between the supply and demand of the commodity" (Rebecca Harding Davis, in *Literary Criticism*, pp. 228–222).

19. The classic debate over "The Turn of the Screw" is a case in point. Now more of curiosity to the historian of criticism than anything else, this debate proves the power of ambiguous texts to lure critical egos. For the central documents, see *A Casebook on Henry James's "The Turn of the Screw,"* ed. Gerald Willen (New York: Crowell, 1960).

20. *The Rhetoric of Fiction* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1961), p. 363 (emphasis added). In *The Ambiguity of Henry James* (Urbana and Chicago: Univ. of Illinois Press, 1971), Charles Thomas Samuels makes a bold attempt to distinguish what he calls Jamesian confusion (Booth's ironic ambiguity) from more impressive complexity. Samuels's good intentions, however, result in an idiosyncratic reshuffling of the James canon along lines of personal taste—proving once and for all the futility of applying standard criteria of success to ambiguous Jamesian texts. Moments of lucidity pierce James's most "confused" fictions; confusions beset his clearest tales. Disagreement about them is inevitable.

suspension of it. The difference between controlled or designed lapses of speech that can be imaginatively restored and the reserve that merely affronts someone is the difference between manners that are meaningful and those that are meaningless.

Through his characters James voices his concern about the manners of his contemporaries, as my epigraph, from "The Story of a Masterpiece," makes clear: "The manners of young people to each other are very different from what they were in my day. One doesn't know whether they mean nothing or everything" (*Tales*, p. 194). The "thing" in this case is sexual, or at least amatory; poor Mrs. Denbigh can no longer tell the difference between genuine mutual attraction and mere friendliness, for the very possibility of mere friendship between men and women is new to her. The greater freedom and candor in relations between the sexes is a minor theme that runs through many of these early stories,[21] and in time it will come to dominate James's career. But already his art registers a change in speech forms brought about by women's greater liberty and men's confusion in the face of it.[22] Like his title character in "Poor Richard" (1867)—another tale of Civil War friendship and courtship—young James suffers "a certain new-born mistrust of his old fashion of measuring human motives" by speech (*Tales*, p. 143). In Richard's case the mistrust grows out of his rebuff by the noble Gertrude Whittaker, a woman whose "private and personal emotions were entertained in a chamber of her heart so remote from the portals of speech that no sound

[21] Compare Mrs. Denbigh's lament with Mrs. Mason's in "A Most Extraordinary Case" upon discovering her niece's engagement: "Perhaps it's the fashion,—come in with striped petticoats and pea-jackets. Only it makes me feel like an old woman. It removes me twenty years at a bound from my own engagement, and the day I burst out crying on my mother's neck because your uncle had told a young girl I knew that he thought I had beautiful eyes. Now-a-days I suppose they tell the young ladies themselves, and have them cry on their own necks. It's a great saving of time" (*Tales*, p. [illegible]).

[22] For a psychoanalytic interpretation of the same historical phenomenon (including a brief reading of *The Bostonians*), see Claire Kahane, *Passions of the Voice: Hysteria, Narrative, and the Figure of the Speaking Woman, 1850–1915* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1995). According to Kahane, male writers of the period use the figure of the vocal and impassioned woman to experiment with their own hysteria, which Kahane defines as being of two minds. She notices the same changes that White and Steiner do, and she makes the important link to Freud.

of their revelry found its way into the world" (p. 140). Gertrude's reticence defends her from well-intentioned suitors like Richard, for whom the "suggestion of heroic possibilities" in her is like a "sweet and remote perfume" (p. 133). A wealthy independent woman who helps nurse wounded soldiers, Gertrude can only guard against the advances of the men among whom she circulates by guarding "the portals of speech." The story opens with her steady refusal of Richard's hand on these grounds: "It's a singular fact that it takes longer to like a woman than to love her" (p. 130). Gertrude fears that Richard is "intoxicated" with her, and therefore incapable of that sober appreciation of character on which a marriage stands or falls. Poor Richard must readjust his ear to Gertrude's private chambers, much as Colonel Mason had been inducted into the *vie intime*.

There are signs of Richard's successful attunement in an exchange late in the tale, when "a certain infinitesimal dryness of tone on Gertrude's part" betrays to him her feelings for another man—intuited by Richard "with a lover's clairvoyance" (pp. 159–60). The ability of this pair's social intercourse to reflect their psychological experiences has been discredited; the resulting incongruence between speech and thought produces maddening confusion for Richard. But by the end he learns to read through speech, decoding tones on the basis of his intimacy with Gertrude. In a cruel twist of fate (rather like Colonel Mason's triumphal death), Gertrude falls in love with Richard's new sensitivity, but Richard, who has begun "to respect himself," finds that his "future was dimly shaping itself without her image" (p. 178). Richard's loosened grasp of Gertrude is an early version of the Jamesian "renunciation," made famous by characters like Christopher Newman, Isabel Archer, Fleda Vetch, and Lambert Strether. What compensates for Richard's "ordeal of consciousness," his "expense of

Compare Ralph Touchett's description of his own social defenses in *The Portrait of a Lady*: "I keep a band of music in my ante-room.... It has orders to play without stopping; it renders me two excellent services. It keeps the sounds of the world from reaching the private apartments, and it makes the world think that dancing's going on within" (*The Portrait of a Lady*, 2 vols., vols. 3 and 4 of *The Novels and Tales of Henry James*, *New York Edition* [New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1908], I, 82).

vision,"[24] no less than for those of the other characters, is the special kind of knowledge acquired in the process. He has learned to "read" other psychic lives against the selfish pull of his own designs upon them. With the help of his friend Gertrude he has seen through the physical shapes of his fellow beings to the metaphysical reality of their minds. In the figures of Richard and Colonel Mason, James suggests that he is learning about emotional expression from women, learning to incorporate their techniques of sympathetic imagination into his art and his being. But the endings of these tales suggest something more: that perhaps James is learning from women how to do without them. His art is earnestly bisexual, teaching itself how to take on qualities of expression associated with both masculine and feminine speech-forms without becoming indeterminate or confused in the process. The freer mingling of men and women in the postbellum years brings with it a challenge to the formation of identity in both. They begin to contribute what were once regarded as secondary sexual characteristics to each other's fully human selfhood.

Viewing women as tutors of tonal literacy is not a habit restricted to early James. If anything, he appears more conscious of tonal literacy as a theme in his later art. Readers of *The Ambassadors* (1903), for instance, may recall Strether's thoughts about Madame de Vionnet during his excursion to the French countryside, shortly before he will discover her with Chad Newsome: "One of the things that most lingered with him on his hillside was this delightful facility, with such a woman, of *arriving at a new tone*, he thought, as he lay on his back, of all the tones she might make possible if one were to try her, and at any rate of the probability that one could trust her to fit them to occasions."[25] By some trick of vocal manner, Madame de Vionnet succeeds in "conjuring away everything but the pleasant

[24] See Dorothea Krook, *The Ordeal of Consciousness in Henry James* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1962), and Holland, *The Expense of Vision*, for systematic treatments of the renunciation theme in James's novels. A more skeptical view of renunciation as a negation of other people has been offered in Marcia Ian, "The Elaboration of Privacy in *The Wings of the Dove*," *ELH*, 51 (1984), 107–36.

[25] Henry James, *The Ambassadors*, 2 vols., vols. 21–22 of the *New York Edition* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1909), II, 250 (emphasis added).

(II, 250—the unpleasant in this case being her affair with Chad), making conversation with her a kind of haven half-erotic and half-maternal. Strether's concern with arriving at a *new* tone by means of this woman's "facility" also resonates with the ending of James's previous novel, *The Sacred Fount* (1901). This playful satire of James's own trademark voyeurism is narrated by a partygoer who indulges his "intellectual" curiosity in the sex lives of his fellow guests; his speculations far exceed his evidence. (Strether's interest in the "virtuous attachment" of Chad and Madame de Vionnet involves similar, if more purposeful, speculation.) *The Sacred Fount* ends with the frustrated narrator conceding his bafflement to Grace Brissenden, a suspected adulteress and fellow gossip-monger, who calls him "crazy": "it wasn't really that I hadn't three times her method," the narrator says in the closing lines, as if to justify himself to the reader; "What I too fatally lacked was her tone."[26]

The narrator of *The Sacred Fount* longs for "escape to other air" (p. 319), just as Strether wishes to conjure away the unpleasant. Each perceives himself as deficient in the peculiar authority—call it the elaborated register—of a woman's manner of voicing relations between the sexes. The application of "method" to these relations would amount to something vulgar, a mean exposure of the "facts"—usually physical—about a particular intimacy.[27] Feminine pressures of tone transform the merely sexual into the fully erotic: they divert into varieties of sound and sense those vicissitudes of attraction that make love interesting. As James put it in his critical discussion of Gabriele D'Annunzio, "What the participants do with their agitation, in short, or even what it does with them, *that* is the stuff of poetry, and it is never really interesting save when something finely contributive in themselves makes it so."[28] James's women con-

Henry James, *The Sacred Fount* (New York: Grove Press, 1953), pp. 318–19.

In *The Uses of Obscurity* White views vulgarity as the negative motive for much of James's obscurity: "the drive to get away from the 'material' basis of the recurrent narrative interest produces an extraordinary range of discriminatory insight into the difficulties and pleasures of fine consciousness" (p. 147).

Henry James, "Gabriele D'Annunzio," in his *Notes on Novelists and Some Other Notes* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1914), p. 292. The passage is reprinted in Edmond L. Volpe, "James's Theory of Sex in Fiction," *Nineteenth Century Fiction* 13

tribute finely to the manner in which erotic love is broached in the fiction. The protagonist of *What Maisie Knew* (1897), another work concerned with the mystery of women's thinking about sex, "couldn't be with verisimilitude a rude little boy," James explains in the novel's preface, because "the sensibility of the female young is indubitably, for early youth, the greater."[4] James marvels at "what [Maisie] does by her 'freshness' for appearances in themselves vulgar and empty enough": "They become, as she deals with them, the stuff of poetry and tragedy and art; she has simply to wonder, as I say, about them, and they begin to have meanings, aspects, solidities, connexions—connexions with the 'universal!'—that they could scarce have hoped for" ("Preface," p. xii). In the recurrence of the phrase "the stuff of poetry"—used also in the D'Annunzio passage—may be found the source of James's enthusiasm. Maisie's refreshing, half-knowing wonder is the only mode of perception in which her parents' sexual adventures can have poetic complexity and meaning. (James is also alert, however, to the "broad and rich comicality" of Maisie's "muddled state" ["Preface," p. xiii].) Maisie creates a "special scale" that lends "a precious element of dignity" to these relations, because young girls have "more perceptions than they have terms to translate them"; their pre-verbal "vision" is "richer" and "stronger" than adult vocabulary; it is a kind of "passion that precedes knowledge" ("Preface," pp. xi, x, xiv). What Maisie knows, she knows by passional intuition, more acute in its "hearing" of vague desires than in its precise, verbal cognition of them. So when Maisie perceives in Mrs. Wix's manner toward Sir Claude an "unprecedented firmness," she senses by its sound a change, an emboldening of their relationship: "This was a *new tone*—as new as Mrs. Wix's cap, and it could strike a young person with a *sharpened sense for latent meanings* as the upshot of a relation that had taken on a new character" (*What Maisie Knew*, pp. 242–43, emphasis added). Like Strether and the narrator of *The Sacred Fount*, Maisie recognizes how new tones transform and deepen

(1958), 36–47. Volpe's is the best discussion of this subject I have found, sympathetic to James without being obsequious.

[4] Preface to *What Maisie Knew*, vol. 11 of the *New York Edition* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1908), p. viii; hereafter cited parenthetically in the text.

relations, but she neither laments her exclusion from them nor longs to escape through them. Rather, she gradually yet confidently adopts new tones herself, to the astonishment of her caretakers. She becomes the user of latent meanings that her fictional brothers aspire to be.

The corruption of such a mastery of manners is one of its possible outcomes, which may be why Europe proves a natural setting for the *Ur*-drama underlying James's best fiction. We can describe this drama as the conscious refinement of the emotional life in a civilized *milieu* just short of narcissistic over-refinement—or in other words, of decadence. The line between James's successes and failures as a novelist have usually been drawn in terms like these. His work makes its strongest impression where its refining, subtilizing tendencies (shared by James's protagonists) are subjected to good humor, humiliated without being defeated, and shown to be the desirable alternative to crude or cynical varieties of realism. The new tones informing the methods of his women do not occlude sexual reality nor try to hide it; rather, they suggest it as an erotic undercurrent in the experience of a whole character. Tones appeal to the ear to hear more than what a speaker's words and sentences can denote. These tones invite the listener to enter fully, by sympathy, into the affective or "inner" life of the speaker; they may indicate transitions of thought and mood that lack verbal equivalents. They are especially useful wherever straightforward expressions of feeling are discouraged, wherever manners are observed. And they are intensely employed in scenes of courtship, where speakers battle each other with purposeful noncommunication—unacceptable in any other arena of talk.

The mastery of such tones may be the distinguishing ambition of James's later fiction. But the late style's innovations in tone, as well as their association with women's speech, can be heard—however momentarily—in James's earliest narrative attempts. A curious fact about the tales I have been discussing is that the speech habits of certain female characters make impressions on other characters remarkably like the impressions made by women in the later fiction. Consider, for example, the rhetorical impression made on the narrator of "Master Eustace" (1871) by her employer, Mrs. Garnyer

> A little curtain of reticence seemed always to hang between us. Sometimes I fancied it growing thinner and thinner, becoming almost transparent and revealing the figures behind it. Sometimes it seemed to move and flutter in the murmur of our talk, so that in a moment it might drop or melt away into air. But it was a magical web, it played a hundred tormenting tricks, and year after year it hung in its place.[30]

Though this description lacks certain properties of late-Jamesian prose—its baroque syntax, hesitations, and obliquity—it might nevertheless serve as a critic's account of such prose. For instance, we might speak of the fluttering curtain of reticence hanging before a reader of this passage from *The Wings of the Dove* (1902): "I'm well for *you*—that's all you have to do with or need trouble about. I shall never be anything so horrid as ill for you. So there you are, worry about me, spare me, please, as little as you can. Don't be afraid, in short, to ignore my 'interesting' side. It isn't, you see, even now while you sit here, that there aren't lots of others. Only do *them* justice and we shall get on beautifully."[31] These lines, supremely reticent in their confessional candor, are not even spoken by Milly Theale; Merton Densher imagines her gestures to express something *like* this speech. The folds of rhetorical curtains in late James serve as protection for characters who wish to reveal their interest in others without exposing themselves to rejection, who would buttress the vulnerability of speech by depleting it of communicativeness, multiplying its range of possible references until it becomes nebulous and may refer to nothing at all. This is why Mrs. Garnyer's speech can be both veiled and airy, its "tormenting tricks" consist of disappearing acts in which the surface of talk is spread so thin that it becomes virtually meaningless.

But there is a difference between Mrs. Garnyer's speech (or the narrator's report of it) and Milly Theale's (or Densher's intuition of it). While both are heard secondhand, Mrs. Garnyer's curtains have a texture that we must imagine for our-

[30] "Master Eustace," in *The Tales of Henry James: Volume Two, 1870–1874*, ed. Maqbool Aziz (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978), p. 132.

[31] *The Wings of the Dove*, 2 vols., vols. 19–20 of the *New York Edition* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1909), II, 78.

selves, Milly's we experience directly. James tells us about Mrs. Garnyer's reticence, while he shows us or impersonates Milly's. Furthermore, so much of *The Wings of the Dove* sounds *like* Milly Theale with her ingenious and willful innocence, while "Master Eustace," supposedly narrated by an elderly woman, sounds much more like the omniscient narrators of other James tales. It is as though James knew in his apprenticeship what kind of effect he wanted his fiction to have, but it would require years of experiment in order to perfect the forms most likely to produce it. In his early tales he can describe the tonally complicated effects of women's speech but cannot quite replicate them in his own prose style—though he later will. Still, accounts of James's modernist innovations in narrative need to begin further back in his career, with his first glimmer of those innovations, if we are to understand his literary modernism in more broadly social terms. The context in which young James's stylistic ambitions took shape was the changing world of postbellum courtship and marriage, a largely overlooked source of literary modernism. The early stories represent this world as one in which women seek a new language for intimating desire without confirming it. The tone of their speech is suggestive rather than assertive, agreeably indecisive, adaptable, held in suspense. Its chief virtue is that more can be made of it by a willing listener than at first appears; its vice is that sometimes nothing can be made of it, so loose are its commitments.

The courtship tale "A Day of Days" (1866) shows how a reliance on this mannered tone can backfire on a woman. Young Adela Moore, as "unduly old and wise" as her twenty-three-year-old author, retreats to her brother's rural manse to stem "her excessive intellectual growth" and "live in her feelings" (*Tales*, p. 89). (Like many of James's early protagonists, Moore safely embodies those qualities that James feared in himself and about which he could write with authority.) She soon acquires two suitors, the Unitarian minister Mr. Perkins and the more dashing and impudent jack-of-all-trades Tom Ludlow. Ludlow's most recent vocation, paleontology, invites crude allegories. He will be the one to blow the dust from Moore's fossilized erotic life and breathe into it a new ardor. On his first visit Ludlow

writes his name on the back of Perkins's calling card, a sign of his subversive intentions as well as of the reckless, improvisational nature of his courting.

But Moore maintains her critical posture, waiting for assurances from Ludlow that he seems unwilling to give. Their final conversation, on the eve of his departure for Europe, is a fine parody of modern courtship, with its enfeebled advances and sudden, mystifying retreats. Ludlow begins,

> "Well, then, do you wish me to stay? All I have to do is to throw down my hat, sit down and fold my arms for twenty minutes. I lose my train and my ship. I stay in America, instead of going to Europe."
>
> "I have thought of all that."
>
> "I don't mean to say it's a great deal. There are pleasures and pleasures."
>
> "Yes, and especially the former. It is a great deal."
>
> "And you invite me to accept it?"
>
> "No, I ought not to say that. What I ask of you is whether, if I should so invite you, you would say yes."
>
> "That makes the matter very easy for you, Miss Moore. What attractions do you hold out?"
>
> "I hold out nothing whatever, sir."
>
> "I suppose that means a great deal."
>
> "It means what it seems to mean." (p. 106)

The stuff of poetry indeed. What is peculiar about their exchange is the way they each subtract their own desire from the sum of their desirability; they insist on being wooed without seeming to woo in return. Moore's "I hold out nothing whatever" and "It means what it seems to mean" deliberately obscure the strong attachment we know her to feel for him. Prior to this encounter Moore had determined that her "generosity" toward Ludlow was "infinite," ready to meet any challenge. But she wonders whether his generosity is as profound: "Should she satisfy herself of her friend's [desire]? or should she leave it delightfully uncertain?" (p. 105). (This erotic delight of uncertainty in Moore's drably *known* world should not be underestimated.) Moore decides to forego pleasure and "to obtain possession of the one essential fact of her case" (p. 106), the extent of Ludlow's commitment. Her method seems finical

though, and her tone and manner circumspect. Her warmness magnifies Ludlow's uncertainty about her motives. In trying to satisfy one doubt Moore creates another, far more disturbing one—that of never knowing what she might have contributed to Ludlow's "generosity." She holds him by too fine a web: he might have missed his steamer, we are told, "for sufficient cause—at the suggestion of a fact. But the motive here was less than a fact—an idea, less than an idea—a fancy" (p. 107). Ludlow and Moore each wait for the other to disclose the urgency of desire as a "fact," not recognizing the emotional cowardice in leaving one's own desires pre-factual. The process "fact—idea—fancy" describes both a refinement and a dissipation of love, a complete removal of eros from the physical to the imaginative life. Moore's language mirrors this solipsistic turn by hoarding its referents: "It means what it seems to mean." When James revised the tale for the 1885 *Stories Revived* he changed her line to "A great deal of absurdity," clarifying his point but losing (I think) much of its humor.[32]

Oddly, though, Ludlow does not seem disappointed by his very pretty little romance with Moore: "She is an admirable girl ... to have learned that is enough for me" (p. 107). He gallantly kisses her hand and bounds out of her garden cheerily. We hear nothing more of Adela Moore, and James concludes the tale with enigmatic flatness—"The day was ended." How are we to read this? On the one hand it signifies the casual, temporary nature of such relationships: this "day of days" ends like so many before and so many to come. Ludlow probably views the episode this way; his dalliance with Moore is perfectly ordinary, one of the diurnal motions of the *en intime*. But the narrator's silence about her at the end, like the respectful silence about Caroline Hofmann in "A Most Extraordinary Case," seems to confirm our suspicion that for Moore this "day of days" is uniquely memorable, a rare and fleeting opportunity that will not recur. James does not indicate how we ought to feel about this. The irreconcilability of Moore's and Ludlow's views of the matter emerges in the writer's perfectly neutral tone—as neutral as the temporal process of closure it denotes.

32. See "A Day of Days," in *Stories Revived* (London: Macmillan, 1885), p. 278.

scribes. (James's neutrality aims at a *neutered* point of view, neither male nor female but poised between the wills of each.) James, terribly wary of moralizing, does not allow his character to make claims for sympathy upon his readers any greater tha the claims they make upon each other. But only such claim can bring lovers—and readers—out of doubt and into commitments. James's prose, profoundly uncommitted in its effor to be sexually neutral, may imitate the vice of his dubious wooers: a disingenuous pose of indifference that gives the reade no basis for assurance, for argument or rejection. It mean what it seems to mean.

Courting in a world where manners can mean everythin or nothing, characters in the early works of Henry James have difficult time forming durable and purposeful relationship with each other. The women who perfect tonal literacy as means of responding to the wills of others, hoping thereby t enchant erotic life, lose themselves to an inner disarray of motives. Their refined practice of flirtation, with its supersubtl influence, requires a thinning of personal resolve that leave them susceptible to misinterpretation by their crude paramours I have tried to show that their subtlety inspired James as model for his own rhetorical bearing. His prose presents a rippling surface of mild velleities, rarely escalating into full-blow intent. Even at his most lucid, James is never obvious. And surprising fact about his earliest tales is that they show him already unwilling to organize the reader's emotional experience with any certainty. One of the partings on which all of thes tales end is the parting between author and reader: it inevitabl simulates the puzzlement, frustration, or confusion besettin the characters. Young James appears to relish his flirtation with his readership, and rightly so. Flirtations with meanin may be his most original contribution to modern fiction.

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The real inheritor of James's project in "A Day of Days" is Virginia Woolf, whose conscientiously bisexual realism records ordinary conflicts between men and wome while seeking a counterpoint to them in the neutral, natural processes of time passi (*To the Lighthouse*), the sun rising over the waves (*The Waves*), and the corruption o speech by interruptive breezes (*Between the Acts*). See Daniel Mark Fogel's *Covert Relations: James Joyce, Virginia Woolf, and Henry James* (Charlottesville: Univ. Press of Virgini 1990) for the most thorough treatment of James's influence on the moderns.

Reviews

H. L. Malchow. *Gothic Images of Race in Nineteenth-Century Britain*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996. Pp. xiv + 335. $55 cloth, $18.95 paper.

Howard Malchow's superb study *Gothic Images of Race in Nineteenth-Century Britain* convincingly shows how "the gothicization of race and the racialization of the gothic are inseparable processes" (p. 2). This thesis explains white Western fears of difference by revealing that it is a Gothic vocabulary and/or language that makes certain figures of race monstrous and unnatural. Complicating the unholy mantra of "race, class, gender, sexuality," through careful and cautious analysis of specific texts, Malchow's work extends the concept of the racialized Gothic in several ways.

Malchow begins his study with Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* (1818), demonstrating that "racial gothic has an older and deeper provenance" (p. 3) than is suggested by the many excellent scholarly accounts of the late-nineteenth-century texts that Patrick Brantlinger has termed "imperial gothic." Malchow's assertion that slave rebellions in the Caribbean inform *Frankenstein* is compelling and original. His deft racial reading of the novel compares selected passages with parliamentary debates, travel literature, and texts produced by Shelley's coevals and immediate forbears, most notably her father, William Godwin.

Gothic Images brings together a wide-ranging cache of popular materials, including cartoon caricatures, paintings, newspaper accounts, and plays that employ the language of racialized Gothic. The book is extremely well illustrated (in both senses of the term), and its use of popular culture broadens our understanding of the power of racialized Gothic language. For example, Malchow's reading of the Victorian *Frankenstein* turns to the numerous theatrical productions of Shelley's narrative. A change in the staged versions includes the shift from an articulate and therefore sympathetic monster to a mute and dangerous one. This transformation occurred at the same time that

British "nigger minstrel" (*sic*) shows were gaining popularity, which suggests how stereotypical representations of the demonic Other were produced and how they reached illiterate audiences to become ubiquitous. So too, studying various versions of the *Frankenstein* phenomenon points out the fundamental imbrication of politics and poetics.

The second chapter, "Cannibalism and Popular Culture," explores the shifting trope of cannibalism as a projected fear of missionaries and the ultimate threat to ideas of fixed and bounded identity that were diffused later through comic play. Malchow observes that "the man-eating feminist, the homosexual aesthete, the starving Paddy, and the alien Jew—each previously constructed as a kind of cannibal unnatural—commonly jostle each other as comic caricatures" in late-Victorian representations (p. 123). While his reading of the homophobic, anti-Semitic "sexual-cum-racial" (p. 6) subtext of *Dracula* seems derivative in light of so many other works on this classic, such as Halberstam's *Skin Shows: Gothic Horror and the Technology of Monsters* (1995) and Christopher Craft's *Another Kind of Love: Male Homosexual Desire in English Discourse, 1850–1920* (1994), Malchow brings to his work a sustained account of these connections throughout Victorian culture. Indeed, the success of this study, which seems to gesture in so many directions at once, is that it leaves no doubt that Gothicized racial discourse permeated Victorian culture and colored medical, scientific, and national discourse.

The final and perhaps the strongest chapter in the book is entitled "The Half-Breed as Gothic Unnatural." After discussing the half-breed, a stereotype that was reified as the century progressed, Malchow provides his readers with three case studies of mixed-race conflicts in the British colonies, discussing the struggle with the Canadian Metis, the Jamaican "rebellion" led by Gordon (also known as the Governor Eyre controversy), and Anglo-Indian relations both before and after the 1857 mutiny. Like Ann Stoler's excellent reading of the Dutch-colonized Javanese in her book *Race and the Education of Desire: Foucault's "History of Sexuality" and the Colonial Order of Things* (1995), Malchow's attention to the specificities of different half-caste populations adds much to the rapidly emerging literature on nineteenth-century forms of "miscegenation."

The book concludes with a reading of the reception of a "real life" performance of the interracial marriage between the black African Peter Loben and his English bride, Florence "Kitty" Jewell at the "Savage South Africa" exhibition, which took place in London in 1899. Malchow focuses on the furor about this mesalliance that was recorded in the popular press. It is in this section that a relatively la-

tent aspect of his argument—that racial discourse is related to the formation (or more accurately deformation) of gender and sexuality—is foregrounded. *Gothic Images* reveals that naming racial differences as both negative and unnatural is concomitant with denouncing the sexually different who seem to perform masculinity and femininity inappropriately. The problem of deeming such "mismatching signifiers" as deviant culminates in the representation of Kitty Jewell herself as a masculinized "Jewish" woman who, unlike Scott's innocent maiden the Jewess Rebecca," was reconstructed "as a Jew attempting to pollute a Christian church with an act of racial perversion" (p. 258).

Clearly and in parts even elegantly written, *Gothic Images* will be an invaluable source for scholars of Victorian literature and culture who are interested in understanding more fully the concept of "racial demonization" (to use Malchow's now weighty phrase) and the persistence of related prejudices.

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VANESSA D. DICKERSON, *Victorian Ghosts in the Noontide: Women Writers and the Supernatural*. Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1996. Pp. xii + 160. $34.95.

In their introduction to *Victorian Ghost Stories: An Oxford Anthology* (1991), Michael Cox and R. A. Gilbert identify one of the great unasked critical questions — why women took to the ghost story so successfully. Vanessa Dickerson's *Victorian Ghosts* suggests some pertinent answers to this query, a query that, as she recognizes, involves a whole network of intersecting issues having to do with the relationship of women to spiritualism and organized religion, to the home and their domestic obligations, to their role as writers, and to the very invisibility that they were themselves so frequently called upon to practice.

Influential though the Victorian woman both was and was expected to be, her position, Dickerson claims, was nonetheless itself ambiguous, marginal, ghostly. To write of the supernatural was thus to bring a part of oneself into presence—to mark that white page—and it also could provide a compensatory outlet, whether for libidinal energy or for the expression of thwarted ambitions or cramped egos. The ghost story, in other words, offered far more license for the imagination than did more realist fiction; moreover, like the short story

more generally, it was not subjected to the same critical scrutiny as longer fictions. It provided, according to Dickerson, the space for woman's "play, speculation, investigation, and redefinition."

Dickerson's book concentrates on a relatively small number of women writers and texts: Charlotte and Emily Brontë (*Jane Eyre* and *Wuthering Heights*), George Eliot (*The Lifted Veil*), Elizabeth Gaskell, and a handful of later authors, notably Margaret Oliphant, Charlotte Riddell, and Florence Marryat. Dickerson sees in Charlotte Brontë's use of the supernatural an attempt to explore a woman's experience of difference and oppression, reading the figuration of Jane as a "wanderer on the face of the earth" as one that employs the vocabulary of mesmerism and the ghostly in order to break down any easy distinction between natural and spectral, between the visible and invisible aspects of a woman's life. It is curious that she leaves untouched Brontë's treatment of the ghostly in *Villette*, where the nun—as Mary Jacobus has so expertly shown in "The Buried Letter: Feminism and Romanticism in *Villette*" (in *Women Writing and Writing about Women*, ed. Jacobus [1979])—functions as a mediating force between the worlds of reason and the imagination.

Dickerson argues that in *Wuthering Heights* the supernatural becomes an impetus toward power, possession, freedom, and selfhood, the only arena in which Catherine will be able to manifest these drives. Latimer, in *The Lifted Veil*, is regarded as a feminized man, blessed—or cursed—like many women with a kind of intuitive spiritual knowledge that cannot find an adequate outlet, and if Dickerson is not startlingly original in putting forward this argument, she makes some interesting claims about George Eliot's undoubted interest in clairvoyance (as distinct from mesmerism and spiritualism) and how this fed into her whole concern with human potential and the possible extension of modes of knowing, communicating, feeling, and connecting that went beyond the scientifically explicable. Gaskell is seen to use ghost stories to explore the issue of women's powers and their equivocal nature: ghostliness can suggest the ability of a woman to wield power noiselessly and unobtrusively, and such power—as when it is associated with witches—can also be seen to partake of the transgressive, can become a kind of curse rather than a blessing, and can bring a woman into conflict with other women. Doubleness is also a condition of Oliphant's writing on the supernatural: women's powers are affirmed through their receptivity and credulity toward spiritual beings, yet such receptivity may also be seen as evidence of their gullibility, their presumed powers of sympathetic intuition in fact being a weakness rather than a strength. Dickerson is a competent close

reader, backing up her points carefully with textual evidence. One could have wished, though, for more discussion about the way in which employing the supernatural was a particularly strong way for women to wield power over their readers by providing suspense and plot twists and by stretching and exercising their own capacities for credulity, skepticism, and interpretation.

Rather like the ghost story itself, Dickerson's argument hovers between the materialist and the metaphorical. She outlines women's position in relation not just to spiritualism—one could perhaps have heard more about theosophy in this respect—but also in the light of social change more generally. She makes some shrewd observations about women's recognition that the ghost story was a highly marketable genre, and hence she shows how writing these tales was in turn a means of women gaining economic power themselves, something that coincided with an increased incidence of aggression and revenge as a motif within such fictions. Yet her historical observations are sometimes reductive, resting on some overworn dialectics of faith/doubt, religion/science, and god/machine, as well as overused phrases concerning the "angel in the house" or the midcentury suspension between two Arnoldian worlds. The prose occasionally descends into cliché, as when writing of "the moor-bound Brontë sisters." By contrast, Dickerson's more imaginative understanding of how the ghost story could effectively serve as a vehicle for woman to "struggle to come to terms with her invisibility and visibility, with her essential in-betweenness" is suggestive. This book may not fully answer why women took to the ghost story so successfully—a fuller study would need to pursue, in particular, Dickerson's fascinating suggestions in this respect about the collaboration between emotional self-empowerment and commercial shrewdness. But it offers some provocative lines down which further investigations into this popular genre, so diverse in its realizations, may proceed.

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JOHN CARLOS ROWE, *At Emerson's Tomb: The Politics of Classic American Literature*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1997. Pp. xvi + 302. $49.50 cloth; $16.50 paper.

The publisher's blurb for *At Emerson's Tomb* promises "a major reassessment of classic American literature," but the

virtue of John Carlos Rowe's study lies primarily in the synthesis and extension of existing arguments rather than the breaking of new interpretive ground. The difference between Rowe's *Through the Custom-House: Nineteenth-Century American Fiction and Modern Theory* (1982) and his new book recapitulates a paradigm shift that has occurred in American literary and cultural criticism during the past fifteen years: away from the kind of deconstructive approaches typified by such studies as *The Purloined Poe: Lacan, Derrida, and Psychoanalytic Reading* (1988) or Joseph N. Riddel's posthumously published *Purloined Letters: Originality and Repetition in American Literature* (1995) toward post-Marxist studies of the relationship between text and context and between literature and the categories of race, ethnicity, class, gender, and sexuality. (As if to mark this passing while acknowledging his intellectual debt, Rowe dedicates *At Emerson's Tomb* to Riddel.)

In the introduction to Sacvan Bercovitch and Myra Jehlen's *Ideology and Classic American Literature* (1986), Jehlen writes that the collection was "inspired" by "an increasing recognition that the political categories of race, gender, and class enter into the formal making of American literature such that they underlie not only its themes, not only its characters and events, but its very language." That recognition has become an article of faith for most Americanists today, none more so than Rowe, whose new book offers a "reprimand" to what he calls "the Emersonian tradition of *aesthetic dissent*" (p. 1) for hampering our ability to recognize and act upon the political dimensions of America's literary traditions. Rowe goes so far as to say that "our enduring literature must meet the demands of political reform," and he does not "mean just *any sort* of political reform"; he faults Edgar Allan Poe for creating texts "that [aspire] to undo democratic principles and [yearn] nostalgically for the strict, albeit arbitrary, hierarchies of a vanished aristocracy," and he openly declares that such works "certainly [do] not belong to the tradition of American literature that ought to provide a cultural foundation for utopian ideals of equal justice and opportunity" (p. 247).

Rowe views *At Emerson's Tomb* as part of a "large-scale revaluation of America's 'classic' texts, first undertaken by Bercovitch in *The Rites of Assent: Transformations in the Symbolic Construction of America* (1993) and by Eric Sundquist in *To Wake the Nations: Race in the Making of American Literature* (1993)." Although Rowe takes issue with Bercovitch's positive assessment of the subversive potential of the Emersonian tradition, he describes *At Emerson's Tomb* as merely a "friendly disagreement" with Bercovitch "over the Emersonian legacy" (p. 41). *At Emerson's Tomb* can thus be seen not only as an assessment of "the lib-

eral tradition of American literature" (p. ix) but also as an indication of the directions in which liberal Americanist criticism has moved in the years since Bercovitch and Jehlen's volume appeared. The adversarial stance toward "classic" American literature that Bercovitch identified in many of the essays in the *Ideology* volume—but most prominently in the essays by Houston Baker and Jane Tompkins—is no longer primarily the province of "Black Studies and Women Studies"; it appears throughout Americanist criticism today, and the fact that it is the motivating force behind *At Emerson's Tomb* is all the more striking given that Rowe is a scholar whose books include *Henry Adams and Henry James: The Emergence of a Modern Consciousness* (1976), *The Theoretical Dimensions of Henry James* (1984), and *New Essays on "The Education of Henry Adams"* (ed., 1996).

Henry James and Henry Adams are not the heroes of *At Emerson's Tomb*. That role is reserved for Frederick Douglass and Harriet Jacobs. Rowe argues that "Emerson, Melville, and Whitman would have learned much from their contemporaries Frederick Douglass and Harriet Jacobs," because "the respective intellectual impasses reached by Emerson, Melville, and Whitman—the inapplicability of transcendentalism to the politics of abolition and the complicity of literary authority with the ideological authorities of modern America—are overcome in Douglass' and Jacobs' uses of literature for explicit political ends" (p. x). Douglass and Jacobs are no mere propagandists, however, in Rowe's account: compared to the likes of Twain, James, Chopin, and Faulkner, Douglass and Jacobs are seen as more politically pragmatic but "equally profound literary writers," and Rowe links them to Zora Neale Hurston and Toni Morrison, writers whom he does not treat at great length but mobilizes as examples of politically engaged writers whose aesthetic value is not (or, in the case of Hurston, no longer) in doubt.

At Emerson's Tomb does have certain methodological affinities with Rowe's *Through the Custom House*, however: both studies attempt to read across the grain of the canonical American tradition by juxtaposing (primarily) nineteenth-century texts with modernist and postmodernist critical sensibilities, thus offering reassessments of both the canon and the ways in which recent criticism has treated it. The difference lies in Rowe's own stance toward classic American literature. In *Through the Custom House* he focused on "marginal" texts by canonical authors and argued that these texts are problematic because they are ambitious: "Much of the ambiguity and discontinuity in these works may be related to the authors' systematic critiques of their own poetic values. . . . Each of these works attempts to go be-

yond certain impasses in nineteenth-century thought that reflected both in the general cultural climate and in the author's own canon" (p. xii). In *At Emerson's Tomb*, however, Rowe depicts the canonical American tradition as far less self-aware: writers like Emerson, Melville, and Whitman seem unaware that they have reached "impasses" or that they need the help of writers like Douglass and Jacobs. Rowe's goal is thus to take advantage of opportunities for connection and enlightenment that eluded the canonical nineteenth-century writers, for he believes that "when many of our 'classic' texts are read in rehistoricized, repoliticized contexts made possible by comparing them with more self-consciously designed political writing, then the 'classic' American literary text takes on in many circumstances a new significance, a wider political relevance, and a revived value for this generation of readers" (p. 15).

I am fundamentally in accord with Rowe's critical and political aims in *At Emerson's Tomb*, but I worry that the thought-experiment he has created here is too much of a setup, its outcome guaranteed from the start. Rowe takes a set of texts whose aims are explicitly aesthetic and implicitly political, compares them to other texts whose aims are explicitly political, and—it is not surprising—discovers that the aesthetically oriented texts are not political enough. Moreover, when treating the works of writers like Emerson, Melville, or Whitman, Rowe seeks out contradictions as evidence of insurmountable impasses. His chapter on Emerson's political writings, for example, turns on the idea that "Emersonian transcendentalism and Emerson's political commitments from 1844 to 1863 are fundamentally at odds with each other." When treating Douglass or Jacobs, however, he seems content to overlook or dismiss contradictions. Douglass's well-documented and easily demonstrable reliance upon individualistic modes of thought is viewed as simply less important than his communitarian aspirations. Rowe criticizes Douglass's 1845 *Narrative* for being insufficiently attuned to its masculinist tendencies, but he happily forgives Douglass and even lends him a helping hand: "Rather than collapse Douglass into Emerson, effectively minimizing the differences between abolitionist rhetorical practices and the 'aesthetic dissent' of Emerson," Rowe writes, "I develop that aspect of Douglass' political practice that seems logically necessary and yet strangely underdetermined in his narrative: the revolution in gender that ought to accompany the revolution against slavery." Emerson, however, is given scant credit for his communitarian aspirations. In the end, I find myself not entirely convinced that the fault for the depoliticization of American literature that Rowe deplores should be laid at Emerson's tomb, since the

privileging of aesthetics over politics is by no means Emerson's invention and maybe not even the most characteristic movement of Emerson's thought.

Despite my friendly disagreement with Rowe over the origins of this depoliticization, I find *At Emerson's Tomb* to be a provocative and useful analysis of current debates over the nature and value of the canonical American literary tradition. Rowe concludes the book with a valuable insight: pointing to the writings of authors like Leslie Marmon Silko, Sandra Cisneros, and Maxine Hong Kingston, Rowe suggests that the past fifteen years have witnessed "perhaps the most remarkable 'renaissance' in American literary history" and that "contemporary American writers have revived a political standard by which we ought to measure both their works and whatever we choose to include in the tradition of 'classic American literature'" (p. 252). Rowe is surely right to suggest that one way to recover the political dimensions of American literature is to read writers who belong to emergent American traditions, whether Douglass and Jacobs or Silko and Kingston. When Kingston gives the protagonist of her novel *Tripmaster Monkey* (1989) the name Wittman Ah Sing, she is playfully antagonizing *and* respectfully acknowledging the canonical American tradition. By enabling us to see the American literary canon through the prism of hybrid identities like Wittman's, Kingston and other writers who belong to emergent American literary traditions invite us to reevaluate what it means to write (and read) in the American grain. Kingston's Wittman makes us see Walt Whitman (and his fellow canonical authors) with fresh eyes.

John Carlos Rowe has met Kingston's Wittman and has been transformed. He has been inspired to rethink and reevaluate his critical practice, and he seeks to provoke others to do the same. *At Emerson's Tomb* is, in the end, a conversion narrative, and one that spreads its gospel with passion and eloquence.

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LAWRENCE DANSON. *Wilde's Intentions: The Artist in His Criticism*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997. Pp. x + 198. $49.95.

'Individualism,' 'personality,' 'artist,' 'critic,' 'realism,' 'socialism,' 'ism,' 'sex,' and 'love': using the range of

Wilde's works before *De Profundis*, but especially focusing on the critical writings that have come under the heading of *Intentions*, Lawrence Danson subtly "burrows into" these terms that he calls Wildean keywords (p. 5). He has chapters on "The Decay of Lying," "The Truth of Masks," "Pen, Pencil, and Poison," "The Portrait of Mr. W.H.," "The Critic as Artist," and "The Soul of Man Under Socialism." The essays published between 1885 and 1891 constitute for Danson the essential statements of the paradox of Oscar Wilde, which is the necessarily doomed attempt to imagine a world "in which individual desire is fully and joyfully free" (p. 12). He stops before *De Profundis* because Wilde's letter to Alfred Douglas from prison "is another story entirely" (p. 12).

Danson's persuasive thesis is that in the dialectic of the One and the Many, Wildean individualism (in both theory and personal performance) is doomed to be contradictory: the individual in the age of "personality" becomes a stereotype, a representative of a class. Whether as artist, critic, or homosexual, Wilde's self-fashioning was defeated by its own publicity. Danson also has a thesis about the fin-de-siècle Decadence as a whole: the Decadence *is* modernity in that it seeks to contain within itself all of the moods and forms of the past. The Decadent critic who knows the moods and modes of the past is a "personality" whose power comes from the masks through which he (typically "he") fashions and refashions himself. This reference to the past, or what Danson calls the Decadence's "backwardness," challenges Victorian notions of progress: hence its "modernity." Similarly, the Decadent idea of personality as multiplicity and surface challenges the earnest Victorian idea of the singular and self-contained individual: hence *its* modernity.

This view of modernity as summing up in itself all prior modes of thought and life is not a new one. Indeed, in his essay on Leonardo Da Vinci, Walter Pater called it "*the* modern idea." "All the thoughts and experience of the world have etched and moulded" in La Gioconda's face, "the animalism of Greece, the lust of Rome, the reverie of the middle age with its spiritual ambition and imaginative loves, the return of the Pagan world, the sins of the Borgias," and so forth. Pater concludes the famous passage with the modernity of the Darwinian idea of evolution: "modern thought has conceived the idea of humanity as wrought upon by, and summing up in itself, all modes of thought and life." Whereas Danson stresses (after the manner of Paul de Man) modernity's obsession with the past in its "summing up" of all previous modes and moods, others of us have stressed the "summing up" itself, or modernity's capacity to consume randomly all experience. Pater's stunning ahistoricism in the juxtapositions and ap-

propriations of *The Renaissance* exemplifies the modern (Decadent) critic's capacity to consume the treasures of the past as contributing to his own "unique" "personality," revealed by his distinctive tastes or even by his psychological dispositions. For of course the psychological summing up—the layering of prior experience in the psyche—is also figured in La Gioconda's image and is being formulated as modern at the fin de siècle. The paradox, as Danson rightly observes, is that the critic or "personality" who objectifies and consumes the exotica of the world in the service of establishing his own taste or discrimination is doomed by his own publicity. Thus Pater becomes the "aesthete" and his tastes become "aestheticism," Wilde becomes the homosexual or an "Oscar," Beardsley becomes "Beardsley," or the Mona Lisa becomes the trite representative of "masterpiece" in the age of mechanical reproduction. We might also add that not only is the modern characterized by consumption of time, as in the past, but also of space, as in Decadent exoticism and its correlative fetishism or, as Anne McClintock calls it in *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender and Sexuality in the Colonial Contest* (1995), "commodity racism."

A consistent thread of Danson's argument is Wilde's attempt to negotiate between "effeminacy" (gender) and "sodomy" (sexuality) when the ideological space between them allowed a "provocative indeterminacy" (p. 34) in which one might be free from both authority (the law) and stereotype (sexual identity). This terrain, too, is familiar, perhaps most elegantly in the works of gender and sex theorists Joseph Bristow, Thaïs Morgan, and Alan Sinfield, who to my mind seem more analytically clear about the categories. For example, "sodomy" is a sexual practice as well as a legal crux ("To Oscar Wilde posing as a somdomite" [*sic*], the brain-teasing libel—"posing"?—that gave rise to the trials that many have argued grounded gay *sexual* identity). Yet Danson seems to slide between "heart and soul" (romance) and "penis and anus" (realism) (p. 106), the "soul's romance" and "genital sexuality" (p. 113), while nonetheless suggesting some transhistorical desire "as familiar and old as the world . . . Wilde's desire—and Shakespeare's and Michelangelo's and Plato's" (p. 104). There is no doubt that all of these meanings—sexual practice, identity, love, and legal status—were circulating in the 1890s or that Wilde himself (like most of us) negotiated intimacies between sex and love. But Danson's account seems less able to make fine distinctions between the different deployments than some others. The lack of distinctions between these proliferations of meaning may be his point, of course, though one not compelling to this reader. On the other hand, with his penchant for paradox and nuance, Danson is

brilliant on how the discourse of homosexuality *and* the actions were everywhere, but few could see them. For Wilde scholars the locus classicus of such blindness as insight is the case of the bombastically gynocentric sheep in wolf's clothing, Frank Harris.

In the last two essays, on "The Critic as Artist" and "The Soul of Man," Danson considers another "provocative indeterminacy" between the critic as artist and the critic as journalist, for, of course, Wilde was both. Yet once again, while fixing on a central crux of the period, Danson writes like those Wilde called, with some affection, the "gifted amateurs," impressionistically pursuing the tropes of the period. After Danson, I would probably direct readers to the more historically detailed work of a Ph.D. student at Stanford named (picturesquely) Jason Camlot, who traces through the claims for style and individualism in nineteenth-century periodicals, the sciences of aesthetic psychology and quantifying stylistics, and the popular press, in which a "corporate style" was consciously opposed to artistic individualism at some times but democratic pluralism was specifically encouraged at others (Ph.D. Dissertation, English Department, Stanford University, 1997). "The Soul of Man Under Socialism" can be read more profitably in the context of such popular and scientific debates than in what Danson provides. In fact, Danson's late-twentieth-century prejudice that sees socialism as "the opposite" of individualism arguably prevents him from understanding Wilde's essay at all, which may mark the last moment before "Western" ideas of freedom (procedural and individualist) and "NonWestern" ideas (substantive freedom from scarcity and want) parted ways.

REGENIA GAGNIER

Recent Books: Circling Melville

HERSHEL PARKER. *Herman Melville: A Biography. Volume 1, 1819–1851.* Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996. Pp. xxii + 941. $39.95.

LAURIE ROBERTSON-LORANT. *Melville: A Biography.* New York: Clarkson Potter, 1996. Pp. xxvi + 710. $40.

WILLIAM B. DILLINGHAM. *Melville and His Circle: The Last Years.* Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1996. Pp. xvi + 213. $29.95.

"The aim of biography . . . is the truthful transmission of personality." So Virginia Woolf begins an essay on "The New Biography" with the remark of Sir Sidney Lee, Leslie Stephen's successor as editor of the *Dictionary of National Biography*.[1] To Woolf, the sentence encapsulates both the essence of biography and the peculiar quandary of the biographer. "On the one hand," Woolf observes, "there is truth; on the other there is personality. And if we think of truth as something of granite-like solidity and of personality as something of rainbow-like intangibility and reflect that the aim of biography is to weld these two into one seamless whole, we shall admit that the problem is a stiff one and that we need not wonder if biographers have for the most part failed to solve it" (p. 229).

Literary biography is perhaps the most difficult of all biography to write, since authors live preeminently in their minds and creative imaginations and refract their private conflicts through their work in ways that are deeply but only obliquely confessional. Biographers who would do more than chronicle the outward days of their subjects can neither neglect the writing nor read it straightforwardly, and if, as in the case of Melville, primary materials such as journals and letters are scant and only intermittently revealing, then the choice becomes one of inventing an inner life, drawing one from the literature, or doing largely without. Melville's earliest modern biographers, Raymond Weaver (1921) and Lewis Mumford (1929), filled the scholarly void

[1] Virginia Woolf, "The New Biography," in *Collected Essays*, Vol. IV, ed. Leonard Woolf (London: Chatto and Windus, 1967), p. 229.

by taking *Typee, Omoo, Redburn*, and *White-Jacket* as more or less reliably autobiographical, a practice discredited (though not fully terminated) by Charles R. Anderson's *Melville in the South Seas* (1939), which marked the beginning of serious biographical study of Melville. In the 1940s a generation of scholars trained by Stanley T. Williams at Yale scrupulously separated fact from fiction and, along with Jay Leyda and Leon Howard, established Melville's life on the sound basis of available evidence. With the 1951 publication of Leyda's documentary *Melville Log*, Howard's accompanying biography *Herman Melville*, and William H. Gilman's *Melville's Early Life and "Redburn*," the work of setting the known record straight was, if hardly complete, at least methodologically triumphant. The "fact-minded" scholars, as Harrison Hayford called them, had routed the "imaginative" speculators,[2] though not without some sacrifice of the penetration of a Mumford or a Newton Arvin. Surveying Melville biography in 1986, James Barbour distinguished these "two clear stages" of work and looked ahead to a third that might combine "the factual biography of the 1950s with the inner soundings of the man."[3]

A new portrait of Melville has been much in order since the discovery in the early 1980s of a collection of family papers "all but miraculous in number and all but overpowering in significance,"[4] along with the ongoing and substantial if less dramatic findings of scholars like Stanton Garner and Joyce and Frederick Kennedy. "Through these archival discoveries," Hershel Parker writes in his preface to *Herman Melville*, "we know much more fully people we thought we already knew, previously unknown characters now take their place with those we were familiar with", and "for the first time we can see Melville living his long life in a peopled world" (Parker, p. xiii).

Yet rich and intriguing as it is, the expanded Melville archive contains little new material by Melville himself save for a fragment of the *Typee* manuscript and annotated editions of several of his books. For "fact-minded" biographers following the trail of the evidence, this has prompted a shift in the center of gravity from Melville to those surrounding him, on the premise that Melville might now be best approached through an effort of exhaustive circumscription. "If it is impossible to know much about the life of Herman Melville," Stanton

[2] *Melville's Monody: Really for Hawthorne?* (Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern Univ. Press, 1990), p. 4.

[3] "Melville Biography: A Life and the Lives," in *A Companion to Melville Studies*, ed. John Bryant (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1986), p. 14.

[4] Hershel Parker, *Herman Melville: A Biography, Volume 1, 1819–1851* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1996), p. xi.

Garner conceded in *The Civil War World of Herman Melville* (1993), "it is possible to know a great deal about the world in which he lived." In the absence of letters and journals, Garner focused on documenting the public and (especially) private environments of Melville's life—"the mechanisms of knowing and caring" through which the attitudes of the Gansevoort and Melville families presumably impinged on Melville "even when their reactions were likely to have been much different from his" (Garner, pp. 27, 2). Deriving the inner life from the contexts of the outer—or leaving it to the reader to derive—seems a far cry from biography's traditional concern with personality, but a Civil War life of Melville could probably not have been written in any other way. What enabled Garner to evoke a living Melville to the extent that he did was his attention to *Battle-Pieces and Aspects of the War* (1866), read judiciously as a work of retrospect and with an awareness of its status as dramatic art.

Hershel Parker's acknowledged muse in *Herman Melville* is not Melville the writer (the character of whose books figures marginally in Parker's account), still less his predecessors in Melville biography or accomplished biographers and theorists of biography like Richard Ellmann or Leon Edel, but the family archive itself (see Parker, p. xvii), which he assembles and narratively shapes with lucidity, zest, and benumbing thoroughness. Although Parker aims to tell "page by page, chapter by chapter, a new story about a writer we thought we had known" (p. xvi), a "story" together with a portrait of the man to whom it happened, is precisely what his mass of detail obscures. Having survived the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans, Melville drowns in the letters of aunts, sisters, and cousins that were meant to be his biographical life preserver. The Melville of *Herman Melville* is not a personality, an intellect, an imagination, or a psyche, but a maker of books who inhabited the maelstrom of mid-nineteenth-century commercial publishing and happened to have an unusually large, verbal, and sometimes contentious array of kin. If the secret to writing biography is knowing "what to leave out," as Yeats biographer R. F. Foster recently observed,[8] then Parker cannot be said to have found it. The archive has been allowed to govern the biographer with the result that, far from "re-creat[ing] some sense of what *was* grand in Melville" (p. xvii), Parker leaves us with a surfeit of undigestible fact and almost no coherent sense of Melville at all.

The Civil War World of Herman Melville (Lawrence: Univ. Press of Kansas, 1993), p. 3.

[8] R. F. Foster, interview on *The Charlie Rose Show*, Public Broadcasting System, 28 April 1997.

"How is the biographer to face [the] weight and mass and density" of his archive, Leon Edel asked.[7] He may select more rigorously, of course—and as editor of the forthcoming *New Melville Log* Parker had a ready vehicle for his more peripheral facts—but he may also make use of the "significant compass" he has "to that writer's archives, his understanding of the writing itself." "He has seen and knows the work, and he must discover the life materials out of which it came into being" (Edel, p. 107). This does not mean reading the work as literal or lightly displaced autobiography but rather identifying the recurrent patterns that inform and seem to have generated it and relating them persuasively to an experiential source. The biographer operates by "guesswork of a most hazardous kind," Quentin Bell remarked,[8] and if at its worst his method can involve a circularity in which literary patterns are projected back upon the life and then interpreted as its fruit, the alternative is a neglect of the work that diminishes the author and loses sight of why we are reading his biography at all. Bell could omit the imaginative writing of his subject (Virginia Woolf) because letters, diaries, and autobiographical sketches were superabundantly available, but the Melville biographer who aims "to see the character forming, its peculiarities taking shape," as Richard Ellmann described the special interest of modern biography,[9] has only limited resources in fashioning an interior life to animate the circumambient fact.

Distrusting the referential authority of the writing, Parker is reluctant to explore it on nearly any level and thus deprives himself of what, handled subtly, might have provided the "significant compass" that his narrative lacks. It is one thing to be wary of *Redburn* as literal evidence of Melville's childhood, but it is quite another to ignore the theme of abandonment by the father dramatized there and elsewhere and transposed to the plane of metaphysics in the career-long Melvillean archetypes of the outcast son and the paternity-seeking quester. Although Parker is occasionally willing to take fiction as fact—Melville, visiting the Liverpool sights Allan Melvill had seen years earlier, was, "in effect, looking for his father, at times quite consciously so" (Parker, p. 148)—he seldom reaches beyond facts to the intellectual and emotional patterns on which a vital inner life must rest. Even when the archive seems to invite speculation, he is curiously silent. Describing a horrific London night that Melville spent recalling his

Writing Lives: Principia Biographica (New York: W. W. Norton, 1984), pp. 101

[8] *Virginia Woolf: A Biography*, 2 vols. in 1 (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1972), II, 109.

[9] *Golden Codgers: Biographical Speculations* (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1973), p. 3.

dead brother Gansevoort, Parker leaves us wondering what Melville's complex feelings toward Gansevoort might have been and whether the late poem "Timoleon" (a story of fratricide) might have expressed resentments and guilts that Melville felt at the time. For all of Gansevoort's prominence in the narrative through 1846, neither he nor Allan Melvill becomes a dramatized figure on Melville's psychic stage.

The surprising fact about *Herman Melville* is not that it should be so long and factually dense but that it should be so imaginatively reticent. No scholar knows more about Melville than Hershel Parker, and few are more acute when they bring a lifetime of familiarity to bear on specific judgments of character. Commenting on Melville's mistaken belief that he had gammed with and been deeply impressed by Owen Chase, former mate of the ill-fated *Essex* sunk by a whale in 1819, Parker notes that "Melville was uncommonly susceptible to experiencing extraordinary, almost reverential emotions on seeing men, or even reading about men, who had endured one particular strange life experience" (p. 199). Observations like this are rare, however, and rarer still is the effort to direct them toward a psychological portrait of Melville.

Even on the subject that Andrew Delbanco regards as the book's obsession—Melville's sexuality[10]—Parker draws back from the interpretive possibilities of his material. He mentions, for example, the sexual frustration of forecastle sailors and the makeshift remedies for it, from homosexual rape (relatively infrequent) to mutual masturbation (apparently quite common), but about Melville himself he declines to speculate. When sexual relief was accompanied by camaraderie among men who were basically heterosexual and by the intelligence and nobility of a figure like Jack Chase, Captain of the Maintop on the warship *United States*, the result might have been a homoeroticism substantially different from late-twentieth-century notions of "homosexual" or "bisexual." Yet having raised this subject in a way that points to a revisionary estimate of Melville's sexuality and that unavoidably evokes "A Squeeze of the Hand" in *Moby-Dick*, Parker lets it drop. His interest in Melville's shipboard sexuality begins and ends with the general fact that sailors often looked to each other for gratification, and any significance his observation might have is left undeveloped by his neglect of the relevant motifs in Melville's writing and the enclosing social and ideological frameworks of mid-nineteenth-century sexuality.

[10] See Andrew Delbanco, "The Great Leviathan," *The New York Review of Books*, 44, no. 8 (15 May 1997), 20.

When the archive is unrevealing or blank, as it is with most of Melville's Pacific experience, a biographer may triangulate documented facts, social and cultural environments, and deep-rooted patterns in the writing to suggest how a particular phase of life might have registered on Melville at the time or imprinted itself in ways that allowed for later transformations. Although scarcely anything is known about Melville's life in Typee, the Marquesas have been studied by anthropologists like E. S. Craighill Handy, Edwin N. Ferdon, and Robert Suggs, and in light of Melville's continuing symbology of Polynesia it is worth finding out as much as one can about the society he inhabited. Parker's notion of the archive, however, is primarily familial (with regular forays into the New York literary world) rather than inclusively social and cultural, and his account of the imaginative meaning of Polynesia is confined largely to the tales of sexual conquest he has Melville telling aboard the *Charles and Henry* and the *United States*. The legacy of Typee evolved for Melville, but always "it had for [him] the relish of salvation in it," as William Ellery Sedgwick remarked more than half a century ago.[11] Polynesia gave Melville the permanent sense of an alternative psychosocial organization; it was a touchstone for his sexual and cultural critique of contemporary America and it served increasingly restorative or nostalgic uses as his feelings about history and his own life history darkened over time. A *biographical* treatment of Typee might begin by drawing upon ethnology in order to sketch the contours of the Marquesan world in something of the way Parker draws upon geography and local history in order to recount what Melville might have seen on his 1840 trip to Galena, Illinois; it could then reach out to the writing in order to suggest at appropriate points both the constants and the variations in Melville's imaginative representation of Polynesia. "Typee" would thus become a signpost not only to the sensibility that Melville carried back from the Pacific and inscribed in his first two books, but also to the ways in which his South Seas experience assumed changing colors and was put to different literary uses in response to frustrations, crises, or historical insights of his later life.

Without a methodological preface or statement of intent, it is hard to understand why Parker forgoes the interpretive opportunities he does. Tough-minded empiricism may keep him from speculating upon Melville's inner life, but it does not prevent him from filling out the record with hunches presented as near fact—for example, that

[11] *Herman Melville: The Tragedy of Mind* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1944), p. 32.

Melville's delay in returning home to Lansingburgh after docking in Boston in October 1844, "make[s] sense only" (p. 305) on the assumption that he called upon the family of Judge Lemuel Shaw (whom he did not personally know) rather than behaved as sailors commonly behaved after three or four years at sea. Indeed, Parker's entire handling of Melville's courtship and marriage has a fancifully romantic quality unwarranted by the facts. *If* Melville visited the Shaws, it is not unlikely, as Parker imagines, that he charmed daughter Elizabeth with his swagger and his tales of adventure as Othello charmed Desdemona. What is less obvious is the ground of Melville's attraction to Lizzie, a young woman without beauty, unusual intellect or wit (and this is an age of high-spirited Boston bluestockings), or exceptional qualifications of any sort aside from being the friend of Melville's sisters and the daughter of a family benefactor who had risen to Chief Justice of the Massachusetts Supreme Court. "Conventional, methodical, prudent," Parker calls Lizzie (p. 311). (Fanny Appleton Longfellow, who knew her, was less kind.)[11] And yet we are told that Melville fell "passionately in love with [her] from their first sessions together in Boston" (Parker, p. 521). Robert Ryan seems closer to the truth when he describes Lizzie as "precisely the safe sort of good girl that—in his otherwise tending toward flightiness, perhaps more adventurousness than he could quite stand—Herman would be attracted to."[12] Nostalgia for the South Seas came later in Melville's career, and having returned from years of vagabondage and finding Gansevoort admirably getting on, Melville may have wanted nothing more than to settle comfortably into midcentury America. Recent discoveries about Lizzie have filled out her character somewhat more positively, yet scarcely in a way that justifies Parker's vision of an enthralled young Melville. Lizzie was sweet, respectable, well-connected, and at hand.

It is the erratic quality of Parker's emphases—alternately hesitant and dogmatic, elusive on major aspects of character formation yet insistent about unknowable particulars, scrupulous concerning

[11] As Laurie Robertson-Lorant reports, Fanny Longfellow told her father, Nathan Appleton, that she thought Elizabeth Shaw "a peculiar choice" for the author of *Typee* after his flirtations with South Sea beauties, because Lizzie struck her as "a plain and most homely girl" (Robertson-Lorant, *Melville: A Biography* [New York: Clarkson Potter, 1996], p. 159).

[12] Robert Ryan, in Stanton Garner, Lynn Horth, Hershel Parker, Robert Ryan, and Donald Yannella, "Biographers on Biography: A Panel Discussion," in *Melville's Evermoving Dawn: Centennial Essays*, ed. John Bryant and Robert Milder (Kent, Ohio: Kent State Univ. Press, 1997), p. 237.

the composition and reception of Melville's writings but largely silent about their nature—that makes his book so puzzling. Years ago Charles Olson proposed to Merton M. Sealts, Jr., a different sort of biography titled "MELVILLE'S ORIGINALS," which would address "the man, his reading, and his writing—all three."

> you could apparently be exploring the act of his WORK, and with a certain tendence of it to be primarily a full clarification of his READING, yet end up with a "LIFE" of him which would stand free because of the propriety of the interaction & juxtaposition of all three of the triad which does seem to [be] the sphere so ignored or unknown [*added in ink* ↑ or badly balanced ↓] by *all* present workers . . . as to essentially *invalidate* their work.[14]

Why shouldn't it be possible to realize Olson's project by beginning rather than "end[ing] up" with a "LIFE" of Melville? Indeed, can a satisfying life be written *except* in terms of Olson's synthesis of "the man, his reading, and his writing"? "The big question with biography," Lynn Horth commented during a panel discussion on Melville biography that included Parker, "is not just what happened to Melville, but how this relates to all his books and to Melville as an author."[15] What standard of documentation can be at work when we are given the minutiae of Allan Melvill's financial dealings and Gansevoort Melville's fortunes as a Democratic orator but almost nothing about Melville's reading marginalia (ascertainable fact), let alone about the literary and philosophical "shocks of recognition" recorded in his works? Writing of *Mardi*, Parker details some of the topical events that prompted the political allegory added to the book, but beyond citing a list of authors, he ignores the deeper immersion in the "world of mind" that transformed Melville from a genial travelogist into the tragic philosopher who would write *Moby-Dick*. Parker's discussions of Emerson, Milton, and (especially) Shakespeare are perfunctory at best, and though in his chapter on "Hawthorne and His *Mosses*" Parker describes the mischief caused by a literary scamp named Thomas Powell and explains why Melville erroneously cited Chettle rather than Greene as a derider of Shakespeare, he neglects the influence of Carlyle's "The Hero as Poet," through which Melville filtered his understanding of Shakespeare and to which he owed a good part of the logic of the "Mosses" essay. Narratively, Parker is su-

[14] Charles Olson, quoted in Merton M. Sealts, Jr., *Pursuing Melville, 1940–1980: Chapters and Essays* (Madison: Univ. of Wisconsin Press, 1982), pp. 124–25.
[15] Lynn Horth, in "Biographers on Biography," p. 228.

perb on the circumstances of the Hawthorne-Melville relationship but when it comes to estimating Hawthorne's literary and personal influence on Melville he blandly repeats the commonplaces of the 1950s (see p 777)

Whether it is diffidence, want of imagination, want of method, or want of space that causes Parker to retreat before the intellectual, psychological, and literary dimensions of his subject, the result is a book whose gargantuan mass of detail surrounds Melville without illuminating him Parker mentions that he wrote the second (yet unpublished) volume of his biography before the first, and it is possible that his 883 pages of text are preparative to revelations ahead, one does, indeed, glimpse a teleology pointing to Melville's exploration of his childhood as he wrote *Pierre* Nonetheless, it is hard to imagine biographer Parker adopting a radically different method in Volume 2 or arriving at very different results with the method he uses

Brisk and readable down to its catchy chapter titles, short paragraphs, efficient plot summaries, and capsule criticism, Laurie Robertson-Lorant's *Melville* is a reader-friendly biography aimed at an upper-middlebrow audience not necessarily familiar with all (or any) of Melville's writing, despite its use of family materials and its allusions to recent social and cultural studies, it is not a book for professional Americanists, much less for knowledgeable Melvilleans

Robertson-Lorant evidently aims to give us a Melville for the 1990s In practice this means a Melville meritoriously liberal in his writing on the touchstone issues of the time (more *our* time, perhaps, than his own) but not above tyrannizing over his household with the combined force of the Victorian paterfamilias and the frustrated man of genius Her main themes— Melville's sexuality, his relationship with his wife and children, and the degree of responsibility he bears for his older son's suicide" (Robertson-Lorant, p xv)—are important additions to the emphases of older biographies, but rather than complement established concerns they have been allowed to displace them Where the late nineteenth century proscribed all discussion of sexuality, the late twentieth seems deeply embarrassed by metaphysics, as if a driving obsession with God could be nothing other than a diversion from the issues that really matter (race, class gender sexual orientation) or a sign of psychic dysfunction Writing, together with serious thinking, 'was a safe form of sexual sublimation,' Robertson-Lorant tells us, "a kind of metaphysical onanism by which Melville had the pleasure of losing himself in the 'supersensuousness' of artistic discovery and creation" (p 191) The God-ridden Melville who could "neither believe, nor be comfortable in his unbelief," as

Hawthorne wrote in his journal,[16] is wholly absent from Robertson-Lorant's account, as he is from Parker's. So too is the Romantic quester who shared in "one of the great creative conceptions of his era . . . , the 'growth of the mind,'" which from *Mardi* onward, as Warner Berthoff observed, became "his decisive inspiration as a writer."[17] It is not clear why an attention to Melville's domestic world should preclude interest in the questions that openly absorbed him in work after work. Were Lizzie and Malcolm essential to his interior life but God and books inessential? To explore Melville in his own terms is not ingenuously to accept him *on* his own terms but to recognize that the "world of mind" was the arena in which he lived out the conflicts of the self. The domestic, literary, and spiritual realms—for brevity, Lizzie, Shakespeare, and God—belong to one indivisible Melvillean "life," a life of behavior *and* of thought and imaginative creation that the biographer must engage in all of its bewildering complexity.

Though up-to-date in its scholarship and political tone, methodologically Robertson-Lorant's *Melville* recalls the days of Weaver and Mumford, when a biographer could mine *Redburn* for Melville's childhood experience and paint impressionistic pictures of sailor Melville "delightedly climbing the ship's rigging, feeling the wind in his hair, watching the play of sunlight and shadow on the surface of the sea, and hearing the sailors' chanteys and the strange tales they told" (Robertson-Lorant, p. 89). Lacking evidence for Melville's early character and responses, Robertson-Lorant fabricates them either generically from an intuition of what anyone might feel or through a naive invocation of the later writing. And like Mumford, whose anti-Victorian Melville reflected the liberationist impulses of the 1920s, Robertson-Lorant, with tacit reference to a newer liberationism, casts Melville simplistically as a rebel who returned from the Pacific intent on "defending his personal freedom and unique vision against both his domineering mother and the metaphorical 'officers' of Victorian culture" (he would marry the daughter of one such "officer" after living in his mother's house) and on "spreading a gospel of justice and brotherhood that would transform the callous 'man-of-war' world of modern America into a parliament of brothers" (p. 125) (his commitment to the rights of man was devoid of illusions about the nature of men).

[16] Quoted in Jay Leyda, *The Melville Log: A Documentary Life of Herman Melville, 1819–1891*, 2 vols. (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1951), II, 529.

[17] *The Example of Melville* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1962), pp. 9, 8.

On the issue of Melville's sexuality Robertson-Lorant, more speculative than Parker, seems right in claiming that Melville's experience with Polynesian sexuality "enable[d] him to envision social organizations that would liberate human personality" (p. 109). However, in applying the word "bisexual" to Melville she begs questions that ought to be explored more subtly and with greater historical consciousness. What exactly does she mean when she speaks of "A Squeeze of the Hand" as expressing a "cooperative homosocial bliss" (p. 285)? Is Melville writing figuratively of a fraternal, noncompetitive microsociety, or is he positing homoeroticism as an essential basis or accompanying feature of that society? Although she presents Melville as attracted to both sexes, Robertson-Lorant seems uncomfortable with an ambisexual writer who might genuinely mean what he sometimes intimates about male relationships. "Homosocial" is her term for acknowledging but resisting the claims of gay critics and transforming physical sexuality into metaphoric androgyny—"an alternative to masculinist cultural paradigms that were crippling men as well as women" (Robertson-Lorant, p. 619). Her perspective is broadly feminist in the sense of looking to the liberation of the female in man as well as the female in society as a source of cultural regeneration. In this she accords with a strain in Melville's own thinking, yet the argument seems to be imposed upon Melville rather than drawn from an insight into his mind and character.

This tendency to pronounce *about* Melville rather than to try to understand him shows itself less happily in Robertson-Lorant's discussion of Melville's marriage. She takes a properly agnostic attitude toward the question of physical abuse (did Melville beat his wife? regularly? every Saturday night? whenever he was drunk? once? no one knows). On less sensationalistic matters, however—Melville's alleged drinking, for example—she gives credence to unsubstantiated rumors and shapes a patchwork psychology that has little evidentiary basis or ruminative depth. "Sometimes when Lizzie reached out to him," she writes, "Melville withdrew as though he were resentful of her for loving him, as though he instinctively felt she had no right to love him if his own mother didn't love him, no right to love him until he could love himself" (p. 171). (Who can read Melville's letters to Duyckinck or Hawthorne and not feel that he loved himself?) For Robertson-Lorant, Melville's growing irritation with Lizzie is partly a displacement of bitterness toward his mother, partly a by-product of his career frustrations. Robertson-Lorant is instructive on the legal and social contexts of the 1867 plan for Lizzie to leave Melville, but the effect of her emphasis, together with her assumption of Melville's

"excessive drinking" (p. 509), is to underwrite the Shaw family's view of the marriage and to focus on the symbolism and logistics of separation rather than on the malign symbiosis through which Melville's exasperation and Lizzie's ordinariness and domestic inefficiency chafed against each other and made life intolerable. In weighing such matters, sensitivity and nuance are crucial, so too is language, as when Robertson-Lorant writes that "Melville apparently compensated for feelings of powerlessness in his professional life by bullying his servants, wife, and children" (p. 503). Some such behavior almost certainly did occur in the 1850s and 1860s, but "compensated" implies a kind of systematic displacement of gratification that seems incongruent both with Melville's character and with the reported circumstances of his family life. His fits of temper appear rather to have been situational and reactive and were probably followed by moods of deep remorse, though nothing could change the facts that Melville was lonely and demanding and that Lizzie, whatever her virtues of kindness and patience, was not an intellectual companion for him.

The root difficulty with Robertson-Lorant's *Melville* is its want of difficulty. Complexity, nuance, tension, ambivalence, and layers of irony are alien to her Melville, who has passion but not depth, and little of the sense of ambiguities within ambiguities that makes him intellectually fascinating but polemically next to useless. Her discussion of *Billy Budd* is especially pertinent here, for while conceding that "the story leads readers into one ethical cul de sac, or moral dead end, after the other" (p. 593), she extricates herself from all such problems by ascribing them to the obfuscations of Melville's "most diabolical narrator" (p. 595), with Melville himself standing unambiguously for the values of the heart. A casualty of her interpretation is the most heartfelt scene in the book—the final interview between Vere and Billy, reported by the narrator in what Robertson-Lorant calls a "pompous prose" that hides "a particularly offensive kind of moral casuistry" (pp. 591–92). Vere may be tragically wrong and subconsciously guilty of the sin of ambition, but in the endless twists and turns of the story through which Melville holds his action to shifting moral, psychological, political, and philosophical lights, Robertson-Lorant can see only Vere's "merciless" scapegoating of Billy "in order to gain power" (p. 592). The "heart" for her is a locus of simple, spontaneous goodness, quite opposed to the "counter-intuitive abstractions" (p. 594) in which Melville himself, as well as his "confidence man" narrator (p. 593), lived much of the interest and intensity of his life.

The passion—and serviceability—of felt ideas is William B. Dillingham's subject in *Melville and His Circle: The Last Years*. Dillingham

argues that, after *Clarel* and with the deaths of family members and friends in the 1870s, Melville's life turned inward to thinking and writing. His "circle" came to include, among others, British poet and essayist James Thomson, the later Matthew Arnold, Schopenhauer, Balzac, poet Edward Fitzgerald of *The Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam*, artist Elihu Vedder (whose edited and sumptuously illustrated volume of the *Rubáiyát* Melville acquired in the mid 1880s, and to whom he dedicated *Timoleon*), and Anglican clergyman Samuel Reynolds Hole, author of *A Book About Roses*, which Lizzie gave Melville for his sixty-fifth birthday. Like Vere, the elderly Melville read for a confirmation of attitudes and postures rather than from disinterested curiosity. His "first and perhaps primary concern of these years was that of self"[18] as he worked to adjust his relationship to his age: to accept the failures of his literary career, to vindicate his lifelong commitment to truth and his inward development, and to come to terms with some of the human wreckage he had left behind.

Dillingham's portrait of the elderly Melville owes much to the documents and commentary in Merton M. Sealts Jr.'s *The Early Lives of Melville* (1974), which it supplements and enriches but does not substantially revise. With his retirement from the New York Custom House in 1885, Melville cultivated what might be called a "gray election"—a voluntary obscurity, even invisibility, before contemporary society that eased the pain of nonrecognition and enabled him to make his study the center of an intense intellectual and spiritual life. Others have written well on Melville's late reading, though probably none so well as Dillingham on his relationship to Fitzgerald and Vedder. The chief interest of Dillingham's book is in the three headings under which he organizes some of the themes of Melville's final years: "Disenchantment" (an attitude of stoic indifference influenced by the "'systematic' or 'scientific' Pessimism" of the 1880s [Dillingham, p. 43]), "The Weaver" (Melville's almost religious commitment to the life of the imagination), and "Associating with the Rose" (his movement toward a serenely joyous hedonism, which flowered in his last, unpublished volume of poems, "Weeds and Wildings Chiefly: With a Rose or Two," a gift of love and reparation dedicated to Lizzie).

Dillingham writes perceptively, and his book is a solid contribution to what is becoming a Great Awakening to later Melville. Though his language of art and the "creative imagination" (a relic of New Critical days?) tends to make Melville more the aesthete than he was

[18] William B. Dillingham, *Melville and His Circle: The Last Years* (Athens: Univ. of Georgia Press, 1996), p. 63.

Dillingham is aware that writing for Melville was above all an exercise of and testament to the spirit. Whether or not God existed, the human soul assuredly did. Literary creation was the agon in which the self fought off the temptation to lassitude and despair, renewed and confirmed its merit through incessant "striving," and recorded its victory in the artwork itself, which few would ever see (Melville's late poems were privately published in small printings, his plans for *Billy Budd* are unclear) and fewer still would properly appreciate.

Knowing Melville's sources and inspirations during these years helps bring to life the internal drama so absent in Robertson-Lorant's matter-of-fact observations that Melville received Samuel Hole's book from Lizzie as a birthday present, "loved growing roses," sometimes "dried the petals and enclosed them in letters and gifts for relatives and friends," and gave Lizzie a "bouquet" in "Weeds and Wildings" (Robertson-Lorant, p. 571). By contrast, Dillingham's interest is in Melville's "state of mind" (p. 3), which he explores suggestively within the sometimes mechanical genre of the "influence study," thanks largely to his understanding of how ideas can be vehicles for psychosocial adaptation. Whatever its philosophical merit or fin-de-siècle timeliness, Pessimism appealed to Melville because its contempt for worldly ambition and fame helped him to accept—even quietly to exult in—his anonymity and to dismiss a society that had dismissed him. Jay Leyda and others have cited Melville's marking of a passage in Schopenhauer that begins "the more a man belongs to posterity, in other words, to humanity in general, the more of an alien he is to his contemporaries, since his work is not meant for them as such" (quoted in Dillingham, p. 76). The success of Dillingham's chapter "Disenchantment" is to bring together elements of Schopenhauer, Thomson, and Buddhism, as well as forgotten works like Edgar Saltus's *The Philosophy of Disenchantment* (1885) and H. S. Salt's *The Life of James Thomson* (1889), in a philosophical nexus that was familiar to Melville and that cognitively articulated what, on one side, he was inwardly disposed to believe.

Dillingham is also sensitive to how influences may interact and even collide as they speak to different needs within a complex, turbulent self. In this respect his three main chapters not only complement but modify each other. While drawn toward the serenity of the Buddhist idea of Nirvana, for example, Melville could never accept the effacement of his private being—though less, perhaps, for fear of "killing the artist in him," as Dillingham has it (p. 119), than because of an earnest Hebraism that found man's justification in incessant striving, "art" being the medium in his own case but never the spirit

tual end. Dillingham traces the theme of aspiration in the late Melville, but in lieu of a richly inclusive psychological portrait (the biographer's subject) he formulaically cites Melville's commitment to "the imagination." So, too, his otherwise fine discussion of the wintry youthfulness of the rose poems in "Weeds and Wildings" lacks density and emotion so far as it neglects the late healing through which Melville and Lizzie, after the *sturm und drang* of the 1860s and the ordeal of *Clarel*, moved toward reconciliation and something like a lovers' peace. However well conceived and sensitively handled, three thematic chapters cannot suggest the fullness of a "state of mind," nor is a "state of mind" a matter solely of *mind*.

The lives of thought, art, and social being mutually imply each other. If an external biography like Parker's or Robertson-Lorant's circles around the core of personality without apprehending it, a literary/intellectual study like Dillingham's provides something essential of the writer but only hints at the circumstanced human being. "The biography of Melville . . . that examines the inner as well as the outer man," which James Barbour (p. 29) found unwritten more than a decade ago, is still unwritten. Thanks to the work of Parker and others, a vast quantity of new material has been partially laid out, and the effort will continue with Parker's second volume and the *New Melville Log*. When Melvilleans have had time to digest the archive, perhaps the biography Barbour anticipated will appear. If so, it will almost certainly have the tripartite focus Charles Olson envisioned toward the very beginning of Melville studies: the LIFE, the READING, the WORK.

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Books Briefly Noted

ADAMSON, JOSEPH. *Melville, Shame, and the Evil Eye: A Psychoanalytic Reading.* SUNY Series in Psychoanalysis and Literature. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1997. Pp. xii + 348. $65.50 cloth; $21.95 paper.

Moby-Dick, Pierre, and "Billy Budd" provide the textual basis of this study of the psychodynamic role of shame in Melville's work, an examination based upon an analytic framework supplied by the work of such theorists as Heinz Kohut, Leon Wurmser, Silvan Tomkins, and Donald Nathanson.

ALLEY, HENRY. *The Quest for Anonymity: The Novels of George Eliot.* Cranbury, N.J.: University of Delaware Press and Associated University Presses, 1997. Pp. 182. $33.50.

Alley argues that in George Eliot's fiction "true heroism" is based on the "equally heroic acknowledgement of the quietly burning heart." Claiming that George Eliot's novels reveal that heroism "is never helped along by prestige," Alley observes that her narratives disclose how and why the most heroic acts occur in moments of "scandal, exile, ostracism, and obscurity." Eight brief chapters pursue this thesis in a very broad range of George Eliot's works, beginning with *Scenes of Clerical Life* and concluding with *Daniel Deronda*.

BARNSTONE, ALIKI, MICHAEL TOMASEK MANSON, and CAROL J. SINGLEY, eds. *The Calvinist Roots of the Modern Era.* Hanover, N.H.: University Press of New England, 1997. Pp. xxx + 317. $50 cloth; $25 paper.

Most of the essays in this collection trace the presence of Calvinism in twentieth-century literature and demonstrate its impact as psychological construct, cultural institution, and sociopolitical model. But several of the pieces will be of specific interest to nineteenth-century specialists: Elsa Nettels's essay on "The Legacy of Calvinism in the Fiction of William Dean Howells," Aliki Barnstone's "Emily Dickinson's Appropriation of Crisis Conversion," and Cynthia Griffin Wolff's "The Discourse of Feminine Sexuality in Kate Chopin's *The Awakening*."

BASSETT, JOHN E., ed. *Defining Southern Literature: Perspectives and Assessments, 1831–1952.* Cranbury, N.J.: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press and Associated University Presses, 1997. Pp. 455. $57.50.

Sixty-one critical statements (about half of which are from the nineteenth century) that attempt to define and locate the literature of the American South. Arranged chronologically, beginning with an extract from an essay by Hugh Swinton Legaré and ending with Robert Heilman's classic analysis of "The Southern Temper," the book includes pieces by many non-Southerners, including Margaret Fuller, H. H. Boyesen, William Dean Howells, Willa Cather, and Moncure Conway.

Bender, Todd K. *Literary Impressionism in Jean Rhys, Ford Madox Ford, Joseph Conrad, and Charlotte Brontë.* Origins of Modernism Series, vol. 9. New York: Garland Publishing, 1997. Pp. xiv + 166. $45.

Bender structures his materials around two literary liaisons: Joseph Conrad's first encounter with Ford Madox Hueffer in 1898, and Jean Rhys's involvement with Hueffer (by that time Ford) in the summer of 1924. These meetings are said to mark out key moments in the development of "literary impressionism," a tradition that can be traced from Conrad's *Lord Jim* to Rhys's *Wide Sargasso Sea*. In the process of tracing this genealogy, Bender reveals that Rhys's remodeling of Rochester was based more on Ford than on the passionate male protagonist of Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre*.

Bidney, Martin. *Patterns of Epiphany: From Wordsworth to Tolstoy, Pater, and Barrett Browning.* Carbondale and Edwardsville: Southern Illinois University Press, 1997. Pp. xii + 235. $34.95.

Observing that literary epiphanies are moments "felt to be *expansive, mysterious*, and *intense*," Bidney aims to show how these particular phenomena "tend to be composed primarily of *elements, motions, and/or shapes*." He argues that each "epiphany maker" featured in his study "is likely to present a distinctive recognizable *recurrent combination* of one or more elements, motions, and/or shapes." Thus he delineates such motifs as fire and water in Arnold's poetry and the "epiphanic vocabulary of fire and falcons and fire-wheelings" that emerges in Tennyson's work. Pater stands as Bidney's "second fire-flower epiphanist," while Carlyle is shown to ignite a "Gospel of Fire." In the final chapters these preoccupations—which are related to the philosophical writings of Gaston Bachelard—reveal the "womblike . . . liquidity" of water in *War and Peace* before discovering a "fiery Sublime Androgyne" in the "burning lava of a song" that erupts in Book 5 of Elizabeth Barrett Browning's *Aurora Leigh*.

Brennan, Matthew C. *The Gothic Psyche: Disintegration and Growth in Nineteenth-Century English Literature.* Columbia, SC: Camden House, 1997. Pp. x + 169. $55.

Claiming that critically unfashionable Jungian models of the psyche are neither "inflexible" nor "reductive," Brennan brings into focus a Gothic tradition descending from the works of Horace Walpole, Ann Radcliffe, and Monk Lewis, looking closely at the archetypal symbols that haunt the Romantic unconscious. Each chapter concentrates attention on landmark works of nineteenth-century Gothic, notably Samuel Taylor Coleridge's "Christabel," Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*, Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights*, Robert Louis Stevenson's *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, and Bram Stoker's *Dracula*. The study concludes with a backward glance at Edgar Allan Poe's "The Fall of the House of Usher."

3RONTE, PATRICK BRANWELL *The Works of Patrick Branwell 3ronte: An Edition. Volume I.* Edited by Victor A. Neufeldt. New York: arland Publishing, 1997. Pp. xxviii + 464. $84.

Neufeldt, one of the most experienced and accomplished editors of the 3rontës' writings, brings together poems, stories, and letters by the much-aligned and wrongly neglected Branwell Brontë. A significant proportion of is material has not appeared in print before. This carefully annotated edi on, which reveals the extent of Branwell Brontë's considerable talents, will ndoubtedly enrich our understanding of his siblings' extraordinary imagi ative lives, including the intricate colonial narratives they composed as chil en and young adults.

3RYAN, GEORGE B., and WOLFGANG MIEDER. *The Proverbial Charles Dickens: An Index to Proverbs in the Works of Charles Dickens.* Dick ns' Universe Series, vol. 4. New York: Peter Lang, 1997. Pp. x + 319. 39.95.

his reference work does rather give the impression that Wilde was right hen he wrote that "our proverbs want re-writing." Bryan and Mieder have eticulously gathered every conceivable maxim in Dickens's vast oeuvre nly to suggest that his writings comprise endless adages parroted over and ver again: "Money . . . is the root of all evil" (*Dombey and Son*); "Misfortunes . . . never come singly" (*Barnaby Rudge*); "One keeps a secret better than two" (*Great Expectations*). Amid the hundreds of entries in this vein, it is a relief to nd Dickens himself remarking at an 1842 dinner in New York: "I have com letely baulked the ancient proverb that 'a rolling stone gathers no moss.'"

RYANT, JERRY H. *Victims and Heroes: Racial Violence in the Afri an American Novel.* Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1997. p. xiv + 374. $60 cloth; $18.95 paper.

iscussing eighty-three novels by sixty-four writers, Bryant proceeds chrono gically from the antebellum novels of William Wells Brown and Martin De ny to the contemporary fiction of John Edgar Wideman and Toni Morrison, xploring the treatment of racial violence in the African-American literary adition.

RYANT, JOHN, and ROBERT MILDER, eds. *Melville's Evo owing Dawn: Centennial Essays.* Kent, Ohio: Kent State University Press, 997. Pp. xviii + 419. $45.

hree conferences held during 1991, the centennial of Melville's death, were e occasions for these impressive essays. Among the contributors are Wal r E. Bezanson, Richard Brodhead, Lawrence Buell, Wai Chee Dimock, Bruce Franklin, Stanton Garner, Hershel Parker, Arnold Rampersad, erton M. Sealts, Jr., John Seelye, and G. Thomas Tanselle.

ULLEN, J. B., ed. *Writing and Victorianism.* Crosscurrents Series. arlow: Addison Wesley Longman, 1997. Pp. xiii + 346. £46 cloth; 17.99 paper.

This lively collection, which brings together new essays mainly by British scholars, reflects developments in interdisciplinary work on a broad range of Victorian writings. Among the fifteen essays are studies by Laurel Brake (on the periodical press), Jenny Bourne Taylor (on the "Victorian unconscious"), Stephen Bann (on Dickens's *Pictures of Italy*), and Dinah Birch (on Ruskin's uses of suburbia). It is disappointing that Bullen's relatively short introduction fails to do full justice to the remarkable changes that have been taking place in the cross-disciplinary study of Victorian writing. The contributors, however, give a good indication of how and why the field of literary studies finds it increasingly difficult to study literary works in isolation from broader cultural contexts.

BURNEY, SARAH HARRIET. *The Letters of Sarah Harriet Burney*. Edited by Lorna J. Clark. Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1997. Pp. lxviii + 549. $85.

The author of five works of fiction published between 1796 and 1839, Sarah Harriet Burney has been obscured by the greater fame of her father and her sister Frances. This formidably well-annotated edition mainly features letters to family and close friends. In September 1843 Burney asks her friend Henry Crabb Robinson about a scandal-ridden society hostess and literary editor: "How do your flirtations go on with Lady Blessington?" This volume will certainly be of interest not just to scholars of the more famous Burneys but also to students of English cultural life in the early nineteenth century.

CARLYLE, THOMAS, and JANE WELSH CARLYLE. *The Collected Letters of Thomas and Jane Welsh Carlyle. Duke-Edinburgh Edition. Volume 25*. Edited by Ian Campbell, Aileen Christianson, and Hilary J. Smith. Assistant Editor Sheila McIntosh. Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1997. Pp. xxiv + 364. $54.95.

This volume in the highly distinguished Duke-Edinburgh Edition covers the whole span of 1850, a year populated with noteworthy letters to Allingham, Kingsley, and the newly married Tennyson. Much of the correspondence, however, reveals the Carlyles in varying degrees of domestic delight and discontent at this stage of their famous marriage. On 4 August Jane mockingly informs Thomas (who has been absent from home for about a month): "I shall try in time coming to be a better *housewife* at least—*that* career being always open to talent." In September Thomas tells Jane that his "message at present concerns *buttons*." Tom Garthwaite, he wryly adds, "is busy with my clothes over at Ecclefechan: in regard to *waistcoat buttons*, it is as my prophetic soul forecast,—miserable *square* black buttons exactly the same as those you censured on the waistcoat I already have." Jane will not succumb to pressure to send him some brighter buttons—"*yellow*" or "ordinary ones"—by return of post: "One is capable of such acts of *devotion* to save a man's life, and his watch," she remarks, "but merely *to expedite his buttons*—hardly!"

CHESNUTT, CHARLES W. *To Be an Author: Letters of Charles W. Chesnutt, 1889–1905*. Edited by Joseph R. McElrath, Jr., and Robert C. Leitz III. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997. Pp. xvi + 248. $29.95.

One regrets the publisher's decision to limit this collection to one volume, but the two editors have made the most of their limitations. The resulting edition is quite marvelous, both in execution and in the light it casts upon Chesnutt's troubled career and the equally troubled literary world he was attempting to make his difficult way in a hundred years ago.

CHRISTENSEN, ALLAN CONRAD. *A European Version of Victorian Fiction: The Novels of Giovanni Ruffini.* Textxet Studies in Comparative Literature Series, no. 7. Amsterdam and Atlanta, Ga.: Editions Rodopi, 1996. Pp. 177. $32 paper.

An insightful study of an unjustly neglected Italian-Victorian novelist who was known as the "Italian Dickens." Like the better-known Mazzini, with whom he was associated, Ruffini (1807–1881) was a political exile from Italy who had spent much time in England. Between 1853 and 1870, while resident in Second Empire Paris, Ruffini wrote more than half a dozen novels in fluent and polished English. These convey psychological and human complexities with great sophistication and were much admired in their day but subsequently came to be better known in Italy than in Britain. Christensen's expert and groundbreaking treatment will re-secure a respected place for Ruffini in the history of the Victorian novel.

COATES, JOHN. *The Day's Work: Kipling and the Idea of Sacrifice.* Cranbury, N.J.: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press and Associated University Presses, 1997. Pp. 186. $29.50.

This brief study opens with an overview of different critical approaches to Rudyard Kipling's fiction, noting "older Formalist and New Critical concerns" in the work of John Bayley and Elliot L. Gilbert while expressing some reservations about more recent interventions from postcolonial perspectives, such as Zohreh T. Sullivan's *Narratives of Empire* (1993). Coates has misgivings about the ways in which anti-imperialist critiques treat the "ideology and history implicit in texts as wholly knowable systems." His own view is that the "variety, idiosyncrasy, and awkward edges" of Kipling's writings are far more resistant to interpretation. He maintains this argument in a series of concise chapters devoted to selected aspects of *Puck of Pook's Hill, Rewards and Fairies, Limits and Renewals,* and *Debits and Credits.* His concluding discussion explores Kipling's last important story, "'Proofs of Holy Writ.'"

CONGER, SYNDY M., FREDERICK S. FRANK, and GREGORY O'DEA, eds. *Iconoclastic Departures: Mary Shelley after "Frankenstein": Essays in Honor of the Bicentenary of Mary Shelley's Birth.* Assistant Editor Jennifer Yocum. Cranbury, N.J.: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press and Associated University Presses, 1997. Pp. 362. $49.50.

Comprising fifteen essays, this collection explores questions of authorship, revisionary mythmaking, and the "Cultural Provocation" of Mary Shelley's post-*Frankenstein* fictions, notably *Mathilda, The Last Man,* and *The Fortunes of Perkin Warbeck.* Contributors include Paul Cantor and Diane Long Hoeveler. Frederick S. Frank concludes the volume with a detailed annotated bibliography that reveals the breadth of scholarship devoted to Shelley's lesser-known narratives.

CRUMBLEY, PAUL. *Inflections of the Pen: Dash and Voice in Emily Dickinson.* Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1997. Pp. x + 212. $29.95.

The recent work of Susan Howe, Martha Nell Smith, Sharon Cameron, and others has revitalized the old discussion on how to represent in print and how the reader should interpret the dash in Emily Dickinson's poems. According to Crumbley, these quite varied markers are actually highly nuanced visual signals, subtle gradations of inflection and syntactic disjunction. The printed poems that transcribe these signals as either em- or en-dashes give the impression of a unified voice, whereas the markings that appear in the manuscripts disrupt conventional thought patterns and suggest multiple voices.

DALESKI, H. M. *Thomas Hardy and Paradoxes of Love.* Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1997. Pp. xviii + 222. $34.95.

Daleski aims to "move beyond much feminist criticism of Hardy's essentialism and of his sexism," arguing that Hardy "goes far beyond any of his Victorian predecessors" in the representation of sexual relations. The eight ensuing chapters uphold the belief that Hardy's "portrayal of passion is strongly ontological," anticipating the equally controversial modernist work of D. H. Lawrence. This perspective ensures that Daleski reads Hardy's fiction largely on its own terms, making the discussion sound somewhat uncritical at times.

DAVIS, REBECCA HARDING. *Life in the Iron-Mills.* Edited by Cecelia Tichi. Bedford Cultural Editions Series. Boston: Bedford Books, 1998. Pp. xii + 435. $35.

Reprints the 1861 *Atlantic Monthly* text of Harding's early classic of literary realism together with a broad selection of historical and cultural documents that open up the novella to the consideration of a range of social and cultural issues important to the nineteenth century.

DOLVERS, HORST. *Fables Less and Less Fabulous: English Fables and Parables of the Nineteenth Century and Their Illustrations.* Cranbury, NJ: University of Delaware Press and Associated University Presses, 1997. Pp. 207. $36.50.

Horst's relatively brief study surveys a vast quantity of fables and parables published throughout the whole of the nineteenth century, from *The Mother's Fables in Verse* (1812) to Walter Crane's illustrations for *The Baby's Own Aesop* (1887). The eight short chapters draw attention to such works as Lord Lytton's *Fables in Song* (1874) and Anna Sewell's *Black Beauty* (1877). The thirty-six accompanying plates feature works by Lawrence Alma-Tadema and Edward Lear, among others.

FELDMAN, PAULA R., ed. *British Women Poets of the Romantic Era: An Anthology.* Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997. Pp. xxxviii + 879. $60.

This excellent anthology greatly adds to our developing knowledge of the achievements of Romantic women poets. Together with some of the better-known figures—such as Joanna Baillie, Anna Letitia Barbauld, Felicia Hemans, and Charlotte Smith—this volume generously includes smaller selections from noteworthy writers like the working-class Scottish poet Isabel Pagan. Paula R. Feldman prefaces the work of each of the sixty-two authors with a well-informed brief essay. In addition she provides reliable and inclusive bibliographies for each writer.

GASKELL, ELIZABETH. *The Letters of Mrs. Gaskell.* Edited by J. A. V. Chapple and Arthur Pollard. Manchester: Mandolin, 1997. Pp. xxxiv + 1010. $24.95 paper.

This reasonably priced paperback edition contains a list of corrections to the first edition published in 1966. It is surely a sign of the ever-growing interest in Gaskell's achievement that this fine work of scholarship has been reprinted.

GATES, PATRICIA, DENNIS LEAVENS, and D. COLE WOODCOX, eds. *Perspectives on Self and Community in George Eliot: Dorothea's Window.* Studies in British Literature Series, vol. 22. Lewiston, N.Y.: Edwin Mellen Press, 1997. Pp. xvi + 280. $89.95.

The editors' brief introduction observes that George Eliot's interest in "psychic framing and distortion of individual perspective" provides a productive means of understanding how her novels mediate relations between self and community. Opening with Barbara Hardy's "The Woman at the Window," the collection moves toward other types of mediation, such as the "narrative syntax of gossip" (explored by Joanna Barszewska Marshall), the author's use of free indirect style (examined by Siward Atkins), and the "rivers of passion and time" in *The Mill on the Floss* (traced by Felicia Bonaparte).

GEORGE, SUSANNE K. *Kate M. Cleary: A Literary Biography with Selected Works.* Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1997. Pp. xiv + 250. $30.

Born in New Brunswick in 1863, Cleary moved to Nebraska in 1884, where she bore six children and helped support her family by publishing hundreds of stories, poems, and articles, some of them somber, even grim, and others humorous, ironic depictions of homestead and small town life, with special emphasis placed on the experiences of women. After her removal to Chicago in 1898, Cleary continued to write stories about the American West until the time of her early death in 1905 at the age of forty-two.

GOODE, CLEMENT TYSON, JR. *George Gordon, Lord Byron: A Comprehensive, Annotated Research Bibliography of Secondary Materials in English, 1973–1994.* Lanham, Md.: Scarecrow Press, 1997. Pp. xlviii + 878. $95.

This comprehensive bibliography includes virtually all secondary material on Byron in English, some nine thousand entries from the popular to the scholarly, for the years 1973 to 1994. Entries are briefly annotated to describe the contents of each work and are arranged chronologically to allow users to trace the development of Byron studies. Reviews of important scholarly books are also included and listed under the book itself. Six appendixes list doctoral theses and dissertations, significant book and manuscript sales, library acquisitions and holdings, places and items associated with Byron, poetical tributes and attacks, imitations, continuations, adaptations, parodies, satires, and poems occasioned by the works of Byron, and Byron in drama, fiction, and poetry. This indispensable volume is thoroughly indexed by author, poem, and subject.

GRAMMER, JOHN M. *Pastoral and Politics in the Old South.* Southern Literary Studies Series. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1996. Pp. xiv + 185. $32.50.

According to this noteworthy study, the construction of "the South" as a concept in American culture—a refuge of pastoral and republican order in an America where, as Emerson observed, "the ancient manners were giving way"—occurred in large part during the first half of the nineteenth century. In a group of five biographical and critical sketches that cover the period from 1810 to 1861, Grammer explores the problem by focusing on the careers of five Virginians: three politicians with a literary bent (John Taylor, John Randolph, and Nathaniel Beverley Tucker) and two fiction writers fascinated with politics (George Fitzhugh and Joseph Glover Baldwin).

HORAN, PATRICK M. *The Importance of Being Paradoxical: Maternal Presence in the Works of Oscar Wilde.* Cranbury, N.J.: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press and Associated University Presses, 1997. Pp. 144. $29.50.

Horan's six concise chapters quickly cover such topics as the influence of Jane Francesca Wilde on her son's bohemian outlook, the "feminist sensibility" of Wilde's early drama and early prose, and the representation of motherhood in the Society dramas. The short section on *Salomé* gives a flavor of Horan's discussion as a whole: "Herodias is not as self-sacrificing a mother as Mrs. Erlynne or Mrs. Arbuthnot; in fact, she is clearly more vengeful and selfish than Wilde's earlier dramatic mothers." Rarely does Horan tell us what to make of such descriptive observations.

HORTON, GEORGE MOSES. *The Black Bard of North Carolina: George Moses Horton and His Poetry.* Edited by Joan R. Sherman. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1997. Pp. x + 158. $29.95 cloth, $12.95 paper.

Born into slavery in 1797, the self-taught Horton was the first American slave to protest his bondage in published verse and the first African American to publish a book in the South: *The Hope of Liberty. Containing a Number of Poetical Pieces* (1829). This new collection includes sixty-two of Horton's poems in addition to a biographical and critical essay by Sherman.

JARVIS, ROBIN. *Romantic Writing and Pedestrian Travel*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997. Pp. x + 246. $59.95.

Taking issue with Anne Wallace's *Walking, Literature, and English Culture* (1993), Jarvis challenges the view that "recreational and touristic walking" in the period from 1780 to 1800 was as rare as it might at first appear. He opens this debate with a wide-ranging chapter on "The Rise of Pedestrianism" before undertaking "An Anatomy of the Pedestrian Traveller" and scrutinizing "Pedestrianism and Peripatetic Form." En route, so to speak, Jarvis discovers the "political divisiveness" of much walking in the 1780s and especially the 1790s" in such works as John Thelwall's *The Peripatetic*. Later chapters direct our attention to the physical and mental styles of walking to be found in *The Prelude*, offering such instances as the lines in Book VI where Wordsworth remarks that his poetry "May never tread" upon the "hemisphere / Of magic fiction." Later chapters fix attention on works like Coleridge's "journey poetry" and John Clare's "Recollections after a Ramble." The study concludes with a concise survey of the changing attitudes to pedestrianism among late-Romantic writers, notably Hazlitt, Leigh Hunt, and Keats.

JEWETT, SARAH ORNE. *The Country of the Pointed Firs and Other Stories*. *Centennial Edition*. Edited by Sarah Way Sherman. Hardscrabble Books—Fiction of New England Series. Hanover, NH: University Press of New Hampshire and University Press of New England, 1997. Pp. lviii + 286. $14.95 paper.

Photographic reprint of the first edition of Jewett's masterpiece together with several other Dunnet Landing stories: "A Dunnet Shepherdess," "The Foreigner," "The Queen's Twin," and "William's Wedding." Other titles in this series include Thomas Bailey Aldrich's *The Story of a Bad Boy*, Rowland E. Robinson's *Danvis Tales* (edited by David Budbill), and Edith Wharton's *Wharton's New England: Seven Stories and Ethan Frome* (edited by Barbara A. White).

JEWETT, WILLIAM. *Fatal Autonomy: Romantic Drama and the Rhetoric of Agency*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1997. Pp. xvi + 262. $49.95.

Jewett states that the "larger contention" of his study is to show how the "minor canon of Romantic drama offers an opportunity to recover from one of the most volatile political moments in our cultural history some of our tradition's most sophisticated inquiries into the underpinnings of human action." He develops this thesis through six chapters that focus on the significance of poetic drama for male Romantics, notably Coleridge, Wordsworth, Byron, and Shelley. *Fatal Autonomy* certainly enhances our increasing knowledge of what remains a somewhat neglected genre in late-eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century literary history.

JOHANNINGSMEIER, CHARLES. *Fiction and the American Literary Marketplace: The Role of Newspaper Syndicates, 1860–1900.* Cambridge Studies in Printing and Publishing History Series. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997. Pp. xii + 284. $54.95.

Even though many of the leading writers of the time—Henry James, Mark Twain, William Dean Howells, Stephen Crane, Rudyard Kipling, and Robert Louis Stevenson—on occasion published their fiction through "syndicates" (firms that sold the work to newspapers across America for simultaneous first-time publication), this late-nineteenth-century publishing phenomenon has not received much attention until now. As S. S. McClure put it in 1891, syndication "is an attempt to give to the great mass of people through the newspapers reading equal to that which appears in the best magazine."

KAZIN, ALFRED. *God and the American Writer.* New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1997. Pp. xii + 272. $25.

Includes essays (parts of several of which were previously published in *The New York Review of Books* and *The Princeton University Library Chronicle*) on Hawthorne, Emerson, Stowe, Melville, Whitman, Lincoln, Dickinson, William James, and Mark Twain.

KOPLEY, RICHARD, ed. *Prospects for the Study of American Literature: A Guide for Scholars and Students.* New York: New York University Press, 1997. Pp. xvi + 347. $55 cloth, $17.95 paper.

The concept is by no means new—a group of experts in various author fields offering to all Americanists (from graduate students to senior scholars) valuable guidance regarding needed future work in these fields—but the exercise at this present moment is beneficial and opportune. Among the contributors (and their subjects) are: Joel Myerson (Emerson), Elizabeth Hall Witherell (Thoreau), Kent P. Ljungquist (Poe), John Bryant (Melville), Wilson J. Moses (Douglass), Joan D. Hedrick (Stowe), Ed Folsom (Whitman), David E. E. Sloane and Michael J. Kiskis (Mark Twain), and Daniel Mark Fogel (Henry James).

LADERMAN, GARY. *The Sacred Remains: American Attitudes toward Death, 1799–1883.* New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996. Pp. xii + 227. $28.50.

Literary texts and personal diaries and letters are among the evidence considered in this fascinating examination of the changing attitudes toward death and the dead in northern Protestant communities during the nineteenth century. In particular, Laderman focuses on the transforming effect of the Civil War, which presented so many Americans with dead relatives who needed to be recovered, viewed, and given a "proper burial."

LANDON, LETITIA ELIZABETH. *Selected Writings.* Edited by Jerome McGann and Daniel Riess. Broadview Literary Texts Series. Peterborough, Ont.: Broadview Press, 1997. Pp. 509. $12.95 paper.

Even though this selection ought more properly to represent its author as L.E.L., it makes a sound and scholarly addition to Broadview's expanding list of titles featuring badly neglected nineteenth-century writers. McGann and Riess present poems from all of L.E.L.'s main collections, such as *The Improvisatrice,* together with poems that appeared in periodicals like *The Literary Gazette.* In addition, selections are made from the annuals in which L.E.L. firmly established her reputation in the 1830s. The editors wisely reprint some of the poet's critical prose, including her revealing and thoughtful essay on Felicia Hemans. Almost half of the volume is given over to a wealth of contextual materials: contemporary reviews of the poet's works, poems dedicated to L.E.L., and the first published version of "Song (Where, oh where's the chain to fling)." Lastly, this edition presents the immense and useful bibliography by Glenn Dibert-Himes and Cynthia Lawford, which identifies where L.E.L. first published her large canon of poems. Like many Broadview editions, this one is a model of its kind.

LIGHTMAN, BERNARD, ed. *Victorian Science in Context.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997. Pp. viii + 489. $70 cloth; $22.50 paper.

Comprising some twenty essays, this significant collection reflects some of the main developments in the flourishing field of cultural studies dedicated to Victorian science. The volume divides its diverse contributions into three parts—"Defining Knowledge," "Ordering Nature," and "Practicing Science"—each with a detailed prefatory essay. Scholars featured here include Douglas A. Lorimer ("Science and the Secularization of Victorian Images of Race") and Harriet Ritvo ("Zoological Nomenclature and the Empire of Victorian Science").

MCCREADY, SAM. *A William Butler Yeats Encyclopedia.* Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1997. Pp. xxiv + 484. $95.

This comprehensive encyclopedia contains a formidable A to Z of all things Yeatsian, from Abbey (the setting of *The Dreaming of the Bones*) to zeppelin (whose raids are mentioned in "Lapis Lazuli"). The contents appear thorough, though it is discouraging to find the name of one of the greatest scholars of Irish studies, Richard Ellmann, misspelled in the entry on Oscar Wilde.

MCWILLIAMS, JIM. *Mark Twain in the St. Louis 'Post-Dispatch,' 1874–1891.* Troy, N.Y.: Whitston Publishing, 1997. Pp. viii + 291. $29.50.

This annotated, comprehensive checklist of references to Mark Twain in the major daily newspaper of Missouri (one of whose owners was Joseph Pulitzer) from the early years of his national fame until the early 1890s, when he removed to Europe, provides an interesting and revealing view of Mark Twain, an author-celebrity whose every activity seemed of interest to his contemporaries.

MANCUSO, LUKE. *The Strange Sad War Revolving: Walt Whitman, Reconstruction, and the Emergence of Black Citizenship, 1865–1876*. Studies in English and American Literature, Linguistics and Culture Series. Columbia, S.C.: Camden House, 1997. Pp. xvi + 152. $55.

Reads Whitman's publications appearing during the Reconstruction period in the context of the legislative discourse on black emancipation and its stormy aftermath. By welcoming ex-slaves as well as ex-Rebel states into the Union, Whitman's Reconstruction texts enlisted his representations in the federalizing rhetoric of civil rights protection that would lapse for almost a century before being taken up again in the Civil Rights movement of the 1950s and 1960s.

MARTIN, CATHERINE. *The Silent Sea*. Edited by Rosemary Foxton. Colonial Texts Series, no. 4. Sydney: University of New South Wales Press, 1997. Pp. xlii + 373. $35.95 paper.

Furnished with a detailed introduction, this carefully edited volume reprints for the first time in over a century Catherine Martin's distinguished novel about life in the gold-mining region of South Australia in 1890. Foxton's extensive textual notes, together with two appendixes giving precise information about the localities featured in the novel, make this an eminently useful edition, one that rewardingly expands our understanding of nineteenth-century Australian writing.

MEREDITH, GEORGE. *Selected Letters of George Meredith*. Edited by Mohammad Shaheen. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997. Pp. xviii + 287. $45.

Over three hundred letters, many of them previously unpublished and discovered since the publication of C. L. Cline's three-volume edition of *The Letters of George Meredith* (1970), are printed here to supplement and correct the earlier collection.

NEWSOME, DAVID. *The Victorian World Picture: Perceptions and Introspections in an Age of Change*. New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1997. Pp. x + 310. $30.

Echoing the title of E. M. W. Tillyard's classic study of the Elizabethans, Newsome's book covers a vast range of material in order to draw rather large pictures of the Victorian worldview. In the course of his six chapters Newsome examines different types of "looking." In "Looking Inwards" he moves fairly swiftly from the population problem identified by Malthus in 1798 to the decline in the number of agricultural workers recorded by the 1861 Census. Plenty of literary examples are given to make very general points about the growth and hazards of industrial capital. The next chapter, "Looking Outwards," turns attention to Ireland and to the empire, while the next, "Looking Before and After," considers the attitudes of Victorians to their own position within historical processes. "Looking Beyond" and "Looking Ahead," as the titles imply, focus attention, respectively, on religious debates and on doctrines of progress and political change. All in all, this wide-ranging volume will serve the purpose of introducing students and general readers alike to Victorian culture as a whole.

NIGHTINGALE, FLORENCE *Letters from the Crimea, 1854–1856* Edited by Sue Goldie Manchester Mandolin, 1997 Pp xii + 326

Drawing on the holdings of five major manuscript collections this paperback edition presents some one hundred letters written by Florence Nightingale during the Crimean War Goldie provides an informed and highly detailed editorial commentary between each item of correspondence enabling readers to comprehend the biographical and political contexts surrounding these documents

O'NEILL, MICHAEL *Romanticism and the Self-Conscious Poem* Oxford Clarendon Press, 1997 Pp xliv + 308 $75

O Neill states that his purpose is not just to analyze poems that reflect on the subject of poetry but also to explore 'poetry that displays its awareness of itself as poetry He proceeds to a brief overview of Blake's self-consciousness about writing, and he then offers much more sustained readings of well-known poems by Wordsworth Coleridge Byron, Shelley, and Keats He pursues the idea of post-Romantic self-consciousness in the work of W B Yeats Wallace Stevens and Amy Clampitt

O'TOOLE, TESS *Genealogy and Fiction in Hardy Family Lineage and Narrative Lines* Basingstoke Macmillan, 1997 Pp x + 195 $55

Focusing on Hardy s persistent fascination with family genealogies O'Toole claims that these patterns of ancestry provide the writer with a point of intersection between the material world and the fictive representations through which we make sense of that world Chapters look in turn at such topics as the question of authenticity in family relations the ways in which personal histories reenact larger familial narratives and the paradoxical position held by women in Hardy s genealogical plots In conclusion, O'Toole considers instances of what she calls narrative jamming ' where the structure of the fictional narrative finds itself in profound tension with the intricate family lineage it strives to unravel

PEACOCK, THOMAS LOVE *Headlong Hall* Introduction by Ray Bradbury Columbia, S C Camden House, 1997 Pp xvi + 76 $34

Furnished with a brief and uninformative introduction this unannotated facsimile edition will have very limited use for students of Peacock s works

PHILIP, MAXWELL *Emmanuel Appadocca, or, Blighted Life A Tale of the Boucaneers* Edited by Selwyn R Cudjoe and William E Cain Amherst University of Massachusetts Press, 1997 Pp lvi + 275 $60 cloth, $17 95 paper

Written by Michel Maxwell Philip (1829–1888), one of the most important Caribbean intellectual-activists of the nineteenth century this interesting novel originally published in 1854 tells the story of a mulatto sons quest for vengeance against his white father, a sugar planter who abandoned him and his mother

QUIRK, TOM. *Mark Twain: A Study of the Short Fiction.* Twayne's Studies in Short Fiction Series, no. 66. New York: Twayne Publishers, 1997. Pp. xiv + 232. $24.95.

The five selections from Clemens's shorter writings and the half dozen excerpts from "the critics" will not distract from Quirk's own critical and descriptive survey of Mark Twain's shorter fiction, by all means the best introduction available to this important dimension of Clemens's literary career. Clearly written, thoroughly informed, and sensitive to the nuances and limits of Clemens's artistry, Quirk's long essay will provide enjoyment and insight even for the veteran Mark Twain specialist.

REED, DAVID. *The Popular Magazine in Britain and the United States, 1880–1960.* Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997. Pp. viii + 287. $75.

Nearly half of this comparative study is devoted to the popular magazine during its formative period, the last several decades of the nineteenth century. The author's knowledge of the technical history of his subject is impressive, and the appendixes, which provide content analyses of some thirty-five magazines, are quite fascinating in their own right. The book is handsomely illustrated by sixty color and black-and-white plates and figures.

SAVORY, JEROLD J. *Thomas Rowlandson's Doctor Syntax Drawings: An Introduction and Guide for Collectors.* Cranbury, N.J.: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press and Associated University Presses, 1997. Pp. xii + 132. $45.

Said to be "the first popular fictional character to emerge from illustration," Rowlandson's Doctor Syntax originally appeared in monthly issues of the *Poetical Magazine* between May 1809 and May 1811, together with a narrative commentary in iambic tetrameter couplets by William Combe. In 1812 Rudolph Ackermann, known for his pioneering work in publishing literary annuals of the 1820s, issued the first edition of *Doctor Syntax in Search of the Picturesque.* Two further "Searches" would be published in 1820 and 1821, and the resulting *Three Tours* of Doctor Syntax was regularly reprinted until 1903. Savory's edition reproduces the contents of all three volumes to a quite high standard, though the color plates have greater definition than the plates in black and white. The concluding chapter provides a brief summary of the history of collecting "Syntaxiana." The two appendixes contain useful information: one itemizes editions, translations, and imitations of Doctor Syntax; the other reprints in black and white the twenty-four illustrations that Rowlandson produced of Johnny Quae Genus, the "Little Foundling of the Late Doctor Syntax."

SIGLER, CAROLYN, ed. *Alternative Alices: Visions and Revisions of Lewis Carroll's "Alice" Books: An Anthology.* Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1997. Pp. xxiv + 391. $34 cloth, $20 paper.

This well-conceived anthology reprints generous extracts from notable revisions of Carroll's "Alice" stories, together with the illustrations accompanying these works. Among the many treasures to be found in this volume is a chapter from Christina Rossetti's *Speaking Likenesses* (1874), which makes a very pointed response to Carroll's narratives. Other Victorian writers included here are Jean Ingelow, Frances Hodgson Burnett, and E. Nesbit. Divided into four sections, this delightful volume reveals how writers as diverse as Juliana Horatia Ewing and "Saki" appropriated "Alice" for various didactic, political, and sentimental purposes.

SPEVACK, MARVIN. *James Orchard Halliwell-Phillipps: A Classified Bibliography*. Hildesheim: Georg Olms Verlag, 1997. Pp. xii + 218. DM 39.80 paper.

Halliwell-Phillipps was the author of some 339 works on countless topics, including Shakespeare, dialectology, mathematics, and topography. He represents perhaps one of the more extreme instances of the Victorian polymathic and antiquarian mind. His researches into the more obscure reaches of English cultural history appeared in numerous limited editions, all sedulously documented by Spevack. In addition, Halliwell-Phillips contributed to a wide variety of nineteenth-century periodicals, notably the *Athenaeum*, the *Journal of the British Archaeological Association*, and the *Literary Gazette*. Regrettably, the introduction to this compendious bibliography is so brief that it is hard to gauge the significance (or otherwise) of this prolific and eclectic writer.

THACKERAY, W. M. *The Memoirs of Mr. Charles J. Yellowplush, Sometime Footman in Many Genteel Families*. Pocket Classics Series. Gloucestershire: Sutton Publishing, 1997. Pp. x + 131. £5.99 paper.

Although this inexpensive paperback edition of the "Yellowplush" stories is to be welcomed, it is disappointing to find that the volume lacks a critical introduction to the contents. Sheila Michell's brief biographical note on the author does not illuminate these narratives, which require much greater editorial attention if the text is to be used in class.

THADEN, BARBARA Z. *The Maternal Voice in Victorian Fiction: Rewriting the Patriarchal Family*. Literature and Society in Victorian Britain Series, vol. 2. New York: Garland Publishing, 1997. Pp. viii + 168. $35.

Observing that "good mothers are not a staple of canonized Victorian literature," Thaden examines a selection of women's writings that in various ways conflict with "an apparent emphasis on pure and self-sacrificing mothers within the dominant cultural ideology." Her study proceeds to examine the centrality of the dead mother in two classic stories of the orphaned heroine: Elizabeth Gaskell's *Ruth* and Margaret Oliphant's *Innocent: A Tale of Modern Life*. Later chapters maintain the focus on Gaskell's and Oliphant's respective works in order to consider the revealing motif of "God the Mother" (in such narratives as *North and South* and *The Ladies Lindores*) and to explore the "maternal circles" that "replace the oedipal triangle of traditional marriage where mothers actively seek to protect their daughters from conventional marital arrangements." In conclusion, Thaden investigates the contradictory attitudes to motherhood articulated in Ellen Wood's *East Lynne*.

ORFAU, HENRY D. *Journal, Volume 5: 1852–1853.* Edited by rick F. O'Connell. The Writings of Henry D. Thoreau. Princeton: nceton University Press, 1997. Pp. xiii + 715. $65.

n though during the year (April 1852 to March 1853) that Thoreau wrote four manuscript journals contained in this volume he also revised and plished excerpts from his *Walden* manuscripts and prepared for publication Excursion to Canada" and *Cape Cod*, there is very little evidence of these er literary activities in these pages; rather we find Thoreau primarily conned with recording his detailed observations of natural phenomena and erning "the mysterious relations between myself & these things."

ORNTON, TAMARA PLAKINS. *Handwriting in America: A ltural History.* New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996. Pp. xiv + 8. $30.

ginning with the emergence of script in the eighteenth century as a medium mately associated with the individual—capable of defining, regulating, l revealing the self—and ending with contemporary attitudes and pracs toward handwriting skills, this is a thoroughly engaging study reminding hat we must be sensitive to the many meanings earlier generations imbed in their scripts. Then, as historians, we can learn the art and mystery graphology and read the character of the past.

LEY, CHRISTOPHER. *Domestic Biography: The Legacy of Evancalism in Four Nineteenth-Century Families.* Oxford Historical Monophs Series. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997. Pp. xvi + 282. $75.

ley's important and well documented study draws on a large quantity of nuscript material in order to explore the domestic biographies written by cendants of four notable families—the Macaulays, Stephens, Thorntons, l Wilberforces—who belonged to the influential Clapham Sect. The openchapters analyze "The Clapham Sect and the Family," the use of docuntary sources in domestic biography, and the intricate nineteenth-century bate about a genre that often negotiated a difficult path between public and ate spheres. The second half of this thoughtful book examines each family urn, concluding with illuminating discussions of E. M. Forster's *Marianne rnton* (1957) and Dorothea Stephen's family argument about her ances. Tolley's work will be of interest not only to students of nineteenth-century ngelicalism but also to literary critics with interests in literary modernism l in biography as a field of study in its own right.

N HOOK, BAILEY. *Angels of Art: Women and Art in American Soci 1876–1914.* University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 96. Pp. xvi + 287. $65 cloth, $22.95 paper.

rary historians and critics of late-nineteenth-century fiction and autobiaphy are well advised to seek out this superb study of the representation of l preoccupation with the female figure in post-Civil War art. One especly appreciates Van Hook's insistence on viewing the American dimension his cultural phenomenon within a larger, international context, another on many literary critics could benefit from.

WADE, THOMAS. *The Poems and Plays of Thomas Wade.* Edited by John L. McLean. Troy, N.Y.: Whitston Publishing, 1997. Pp. xiv + 699. $65.

Based on materials auctioned at Sotheby's in 1979, McLean's edition features Wade's dramas, including the controversial *The Jew of Aragon* (the subject of anti-Semitic protest at Covent Garden in October 1830) and *The Dark Diamond* (a "rambunctious sport of crime drama and musical comedy" set in medieval Europe). Among the large corpus of poems are some highly erotic lines, dating from 1837, praising such delights as the "incarnate sweetness of that kiss-fond mouth." Some of Wade's poems appeared in the *Monthly Repository*, and it is interesting to compare them with the early writings of Robert Browning, who also published in that significant journal.

WATERS, CATHERINE. *Dickens and the Politics of the Family.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997. Pp. xii + 233. $54.95.

Drawing on biographical information to illuminate Dickens's interest in "fractured families," Waters's thematic study considers how this preoccupation conflicts with the types of domestic ideology propagated by the numerous family magazines that flourished from the 1830s to the 1860s. By employing the influential work of Michel Foucault and Jacques Donzelot, Waters argues that the discursive formation of the family in Dickens's fiction should not be considered in terms of the extent to which they comply with social realities. Instead, Waters claims, we need to look at how Dickens's "fictions test the hegemonic discourse of the middle-class family even as they seek to affirm it." She pursues this argument across the novelist's canon, all the way from *Oliver Twist* to *Our Mutual Friend.*

WATSON, CHARLES S. *The History of Southern Drama.* Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1997. Pp. xii + 259. $29.95.

Shakespeare receives just about as much (or as little) attention as Tallulah Bankhead in this survey of the South's dramatic literature, but the narrowly focused vision of this regional approach to an interesting and important subject does bring to our attention many facts and figures we otherwise might have overlooked.

WINSHIP, MICHAEL. *American Literary Publishing in the Mid-Nineteenth Century: The Business of Ticknor and Fields.* Cambridge Studies in Publishing and Printing History Series. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996. Pp. xvi + 244. $59.95.

Here is the narrative analysis that has long been implicit in the magnificent business records of Ticknor and Fields, preserved in the Houghton Library of Harvard College and in part edited by William Charvat and Warren S. Tryon as *The Cost Books of Ticknor and Fields and Their Predecessors, 1832–1858* (1949). Parts of this important story have been told before, most notably by Charvat and Tryon themselves in various other publications, but never so satisfactorily and coherently as in this remarkably learned and sensible book.

…LF, MILTON T., ed. *Shaw and Science Fiction.* SHAW: The An-
…l of Bernard Shaw Studies, Vol. 17. University Park: Pennsylvania
…e University Press, 1997. Pp. x + 294. $35.

…erving that it is "well established" among critics that Shaw "utilized SF …ventions," Wolf declares that Shaw employed the "techniques of specula-… fiction to sugar-coat the philosophical and socialistic pill." Subsequent …ributions to this volume explore such topics as Shaw's utopias and his an-…sation of developments in later SF, including Philip K. Dick's *Do Androids …m of Electric Sheep?* (1968) and Robert A. Heinlein's *Methuselah's Children* (1…)

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